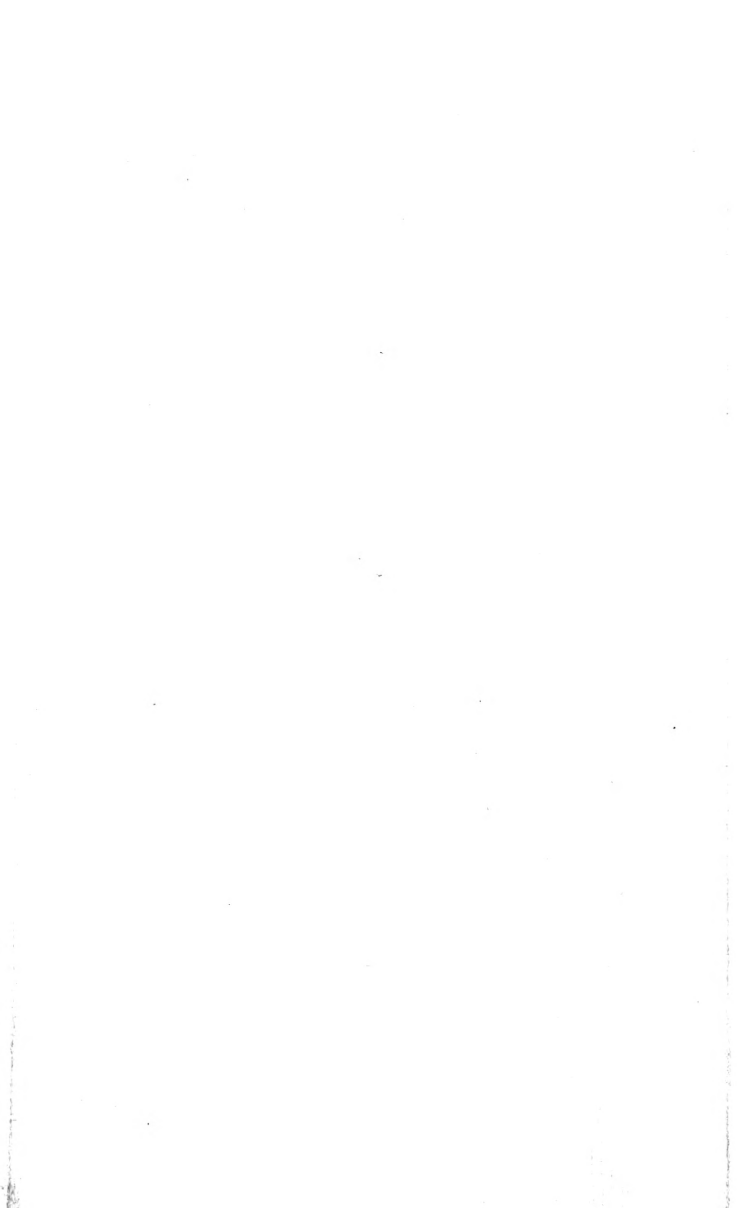


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John H. Mills

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF THE

REV. JOHN H. MILLS,

A Local Deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church,

WITH

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS,

CONSISTING OF

FUGITIVE PIECES IN PROSE AND RHYME.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

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TO MY MOTHER,
IN GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE
OF HER
EARLY DEVOTION
TO THE
WELFARE OF HER CHILDREN,
AND OF HER EARNEST
EFFORTS TO TRAIN THEM FOR USEFULNESS AND HEAVEN,
THIS BOOK,
THE FIRST FRUITS OF MY PEN,
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.



PREFACE.

BELIEVING that the history of the humblest individual, if faithfully written out, would furnish points of interest, especially to those of the same class and circumstances in life, and particularly that the religious experience of Christians is always interesting and profitable to other Christians, and sometimes even to those destitute of all religion, I have ventured to offer to the public eye the contents of the following pages.

The work is of such a character as to render any prefatory remarks almost unnecessary ; but on one or two points it may not be amiss to speak.

It will be seen that the space occupied by the relation of my awakening, conversion, and

early religious course is out of proportion to the rest of my narrative. I have been more full and particular on these points, as I deem it most important to lay safely the foundation of the Christian edifice. Any oversight or error at the outset of the Christian life mars the beauty of the structure—if it does not diminish its strength, and prove an element of early decay.

I greatly desire that the relation of my experience may encourage every seeking soul to make thorough work in his preparation for Heaven. Let him not daub with untempered mortar, or say peace to his soul when there is no peace.

There are those who take a devious course to establish the fact of their own conversion. From certain changes in their tastes and habits they argue the possession, on their part, of the new nature, instead of relying upon the only conclusive and Scriptural evidence—the witness of the Spirit.

They are quite disposed to reason with others, as perhaps they have reasoned with

themselves—"You love now the things that once you did not love; you now love prayer and reading the Word of God; you love the society of Christian people, and to participate in religious conversation, &c., &c.; these things were once distasteful to you; you are therefore changed; you are converted."

The person who needs to be reasoned into the conviction that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus, may well distrust his spiritual state. Let no one rely for evidence of his conversion upon the testimony of man. The Apostolic teaching is this: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 15, 16.) Let no one rest short of this, on peril of his happiness and welfare. Well does the poet sing—

"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes."

Until the soul can thus look up, and, by faith, say Abba, Father, let it continue to cry for mercy.

Great injury to individuals is done by attempting to persuade the seeking sinner that he is converted ; and the general tone of piety in the church is greatly damaged thereby. Let the sinner's own heart respond to the address from Heaven—"Son or daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee ; go in peace."

My principal reason for dwelling so minutely upon the period of my conversion is, to show to every seeker the absolute necessity of remaining at the cross until he is soundly converted, nay, transformed into the very image of God.

I now commend the fruit of my labors to the favor and blessing of Almighty God, with the fervent prayer that it may not be altogether in vain.

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CHAPTER I.

REASONS FOR WRITING—BIRTH—FATHER'S FAMILY—
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TEMPER—THE AFFAIR OF THE MILKING PAIL—DISLIKE
FOR WORK.

MEN of the present age are debtors to the future. Having enjoyed the advantages derived from the labor, thought and example of those who have gone before, they are under obligation to make a beacon light of their own experience, as an admonition or encouragement to those who may come after them. Fully impressed with this truth, the author has undertaken, as he thinks, from a sense of duty, to make a plain transcript of his christian experience, as well as of the principal circumstances of his

earlier life, that others, and especially the young, may avoid his errors, and thus escape years of solicitude and anxious care. He also writes with the hope and prayer, that those who are desirous of growing up to honor and usefulness, and in the end attaining immortality and eternal life, may receive encouragement and assistance from the record of God's dealings with him. It has been his privilege to live in a christian land, in the midst of great facilities for improvement, surrounded by relatives and friends. A good Providence has also smiled upon him, and given him a fair proportion of temporal prosperity. He has, however, as a stranger and a pilgrim, met on his journey strangers and enemies, good and bad, rich and poor, and been exposed to censure and praise, temptation and trial, yet through all a faithful Lord has hitherto mysteriously guided him. In prosperity and adversity, in sickness and in health, he has been alike supported and sustained, and now, with his feet upon the Rock, and the hope of Heaven in his heart, he comes to speak, especially to the young and inexperienced, of the way in which he has been led, with the earnest prayer that they may be profited thereby.

The author makes no pretensions to literary skill ; he is a plain man, and will write in plain style for plain readers. He is aware that many biographies have been written by learned men, adorned by all the graces of style and enriched by the resources of science and literature, but he will make no attempt to rival them, contenting himself with a simple re-

lation of truth unadorned. He neither expects nor desires to win honor or profit by his labor. If he shall be so happy as to speak a word that may awaken a serious thought in a careless mind, or breathe into the desponding heart a spirit of consolation, or arouse the courage of the faint hearted, he will consider himself abundantly rewarded. He bespeaks the forbearance and consideration of the critical. Should one of this class perchance cast his eye on these humble pages, let him remember that the writer seeks less for fame than to do good, and it is hoped he will promote rather than attempt to defeat this unobtrusive mission.

I was born at Springfield, Long Island, New-York, on the 15th day of May, A. D., 1811, and in that place my youthful days were spent. I was the fifth of a family of ten children, consisting of six sons and four daughters, eight of whom lived to years of maturity, and two died in infancy. My parents owned and occupied a farm, and being old residents of the place, were surrounded by a large circle of relatives and friends. My advantages for education were not favorable, and practical piety seemed scarcely to exist in our neighborhood. The religion of the inhabitants was one of the sheerest form, consisting of an occasional attendance at one of our village churches, and the religious education of their children was limited to an attempt to prevent gross violations of the law of morality. My own parents did not differ in this respect from their neighbors, being classed among the fashionable and respectable of that region, and possessing a religious

creed so lax and accommodating as to permit the indulgence of almost any ordinary sin.

There was, however, one shining exception to this general formality and worldliness. About a mile from my home lived a man who unquestionably possessed both the life and power of godliness. He was the theme of conversation, and was universally accounted a very holy man. I remember the sacred awe with which I used to gaze into his countenance, and the wonder with which I listened to his conversation. While I knew nothing of God or Christ, this man's example and words awakened in me, and I doubt not in others, many anxious thoughts and fearful emotions, and had there been some one then to have taken me by the hand and taught me the way of faith, I cannot doubt, I should, in the very morning of life, have given my young heart to the Saviour. I mention this circumstance to encourage the christian to "sow beside all waters," and especially never to neglect opportunities to speak a word in season to children. "A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," and a plain faithful remark let fall with prayer, may be the means, in the hand of God, of saving "a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins."

The most intimate companion of my early life was a younger brother, of amiable disposition and sweet spirit, and frequent reference will be made to him in these pages, especially in those parts that refer to my life at home. Unlike the rest of the family, he was exceedingly conscientious, and he early sought and found the Saviour. It would be

pleasant to continue my narrative from the time of his conversion, but I must return, for the sake of truth, and though painful to myself, relate things which show that I possessed in early life a very wicked heart.

One Sabbath, after my parents had gone to church, I prepared for an excursion to a neighboring pond, where I designed to pass my time until their return in amusing myself with a little boat. I urged my little brother to accompany me, but he declined, at the same time reproving me for violating the Sabbath. His reproof, though affectionately and kindly urged, was entirely lost upon me, and I went on my way to the pond, and spent the time until my parents returned, in play. On another Sabbath I contemplated visiting this pond after my father had gone to church, and was preparing some fishing tackle, which I designed to carry with me. My brother entered the carriage loft, where I was making my preparations, and I requested him to assist me in fastening on a hook, but he declined, threatening to report my intentions to my father. His threat startled me a little, as my father was sometimes stern in his punishment, and rising up hastily from the floor, I accidentally placed my foot on the line, and thus drew the hook deep into my finger. I tried to draw it out, but the barb of the hook held it fast, and all my efforts were in vain. It gave me great pain, and in my nervous alarm I thought I was dying. My brother proposed to call my father, but I begged him not to do so, saying, let me die here. He however gave informa-

tion, and I was called into the house. After an examination, my father attempted to cut out the hook with his razor, but my courage failed, and I begged him to desist, saying I was willing to die, but could not have it cut out. The scene melted my father into tears; my elder brother was called from a neighbor's house, and instead of going to church, he was despatched with me to the doctor's, who, after some difficulty and giving me great pain, extracted the hook, bound up my finger and sent me home.

This affair made a strong impression upon my mind, and for some time I was more careful in the observance of the Sabbath.

But wilfulness and disobedience to parents were not my only faults. I was passionate and cowardly, proud and lazy. These traits of character grew with my growth and strengthened with my strength.

The elder children of my father's family being boys, were frequently required to do work that in other circumstances would have been done by girls. This is quite common in country places. When the dairy is large, the men and boys usually assist in milking the cows, and sometimes altogether relieve the women of this duty. In my father's family this labor fell upon the boys, as soon as they were large enough to discharge it. Milking, however, was my special abhorrence, and I always escaped it when I could. One evening, when it was my younger brother's turn to perform this task, he happened to be indisposed, and I was directed to take his place. I refused, but was compelled to

obey. Pail in hand, I went reluctantly towards the barn yard, but in a very bad humor. On my way, my brother, who had witnessed my refusal, called out in a bantering tone, "Ah! you had to go, had you?" This salutation stirred my passion beyond control, and in a sudden paroxysm of anger, I dashed my pail against the barn with such violence as to stave in the bottom. My brother, not observing the damage I had done, went on his way, while fear of consequences suddenly overcame my anger. Afraid to go to the house and frankly confess my fault, I knew not what to do. At last I repaired the mischief I had done as well as I could, and went to milking. When I had finished, I carried the streaming pail into the cellar, and left it there. But when my mother went to strain the milk she found the pail empty, and discovering the fracture in the bottom, I was summoned to account for it. Assuming an air of innocence, I professed ignorance, but my brother, relating what he had witnessed, I was condemned and properly chastised.

A thorough distaste for any useful employment was a marked feature in my character in early life. In amusements of any kind, or in play, I was as active and energetic as any boy of my age, but for any labor or useful occupation, I had a very decided dislike. As years advanced, play lost its charm, and having no habits of industry, I found myself an ignorant, sluggish, lazy fellow. Solomon says, "The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns." Prov. xv. 19. He imagines every molehill of duty to be a mountain of difficulty, and hence the school and

book always had, like the hedge of thorns, their thousand pointed difficulties for me. And having no taste for study or industrious habits, I was not only ignorant, but my condition exposed me to many temptations. There is truth and sound philosophy in the simple language of the poet :

“Idle boys and girls are found,
 Standing on the devil's ground ;
He will find them work to do,
 And he will pay them wages, too.”

CHAPTER II.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”—Prov. xxii. 6.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EDUCATION—IMPRESSIONS ARE MADE VERY EARLY—MY FATHER BECOMES A SOLDIER—A MOTHER’S TEACHING—ITS EFFECT—“THE DECREES”—SEED SOWN EARLY WILL SPRING UP—SUNDAY SCHOOL INSTRUCTION—A GROVE MEETING—A DESCRIPTION OF AN OLD-FASHIONED METHODIST CHURCH.

It is to be feared that the public teachers of religion, the laborers in Sunday Schools, and even parents, are too little impressed with the importance of sowing the seeds of piety in the hearts of the young. The mind is susceptible of religious instruction at a much earlier period than is generally supposed. Children reason, too, at an age when parents suppose they are entirely inattentive to what may be said and done in their presence. We can scarcely estimate the evil effects, upon very young children, of improper actions or thoughtless words. Nor can we foresee at what period the young heart may be so impressed by the judicious teacher, as to be won from error, and directed in the path of righteousness and peace. My own heart was peculiarly susceptible of both good and evil influences at a very early period, and I seem to myself to have been reflective and thoughtful at an age when

most persons deem children governed by instinct only. I can look back, to-day, with great distinctness, to events which occurred when I could not have been more than four years old; and I feel persuaded that impressions made upon my mind then had a tendency to shape my future character.

During the last war with Great Britain, which terminated in 1815, my father was ordered to join the American forces, stationed at Fort Green, Brooklyn, N. Y. I remember, well, it was one pleasant summer's day, towards noon, that he was making preparations to respond to the call of his country. He was preparing his gun and military equipments, while I looked wonderingly on, laboring to understand the nature of the call that carried him from his home. From the conversation that occurred, and the preparations he was making, I soon comprehended that he was going out to shoot men, who, for some cause, were coming against us; and I remember, too, that the impression that he might fall gave me very painful sensations. Reflections upon the wickedness of men followed, and, in tears, I wondered at man's inhumanity to man, and could not understand why they might not live together as brothers. Even at that early age I comprehended something of the inbred corruption and depravity of human nature.

Impressions of another character were also very early made upon my mind, and they have proved imperishable. One Sabbath morning, after part of the family had gone to church, and some of the larger children had made their escape into the

fields adjacent to the house, my mother sat reading the Bible, while I and some of the younger children were playing about the floor. The picture of that beautiful Sabbath morning, with its holy quiet, is faithfully reproduced by memory, and I can distinctly call up the rich glad sunshine, flooding the kitchen, through the large window, at which my mother sat, and warming the whole landscape without with its glow—the cattle peacefully grazing in the distant pastures—the birds flitting from tree to tree, and awakening the echoes of the silent groves with their wild notes—the signs of industry and thrift about the well-kept fields—the old well-curb in the yard—all these come up to my vision so distinctly, that I seem to be transported back to the days of my boyhood, and can almost hear the mild accents of my mother's voice as she kindly rebukes her noisy children on the floor. Impressed by the scene, I ceased from play, and, silently drawing near my mother, I seated myself by her side, and, leaning upon her lap, looked thoughtfully up into her face. After a moment's pause, she opened her lips, and, commencing at the nineteenth verse of the 16th chapter of the Gospel by St. Luke, read the impressive account of Dives and Lazarus. When the reading was finished, she explained and improved the passage somewhat as follows, viz.: "My children, what I have now read is either a narrative or a parable, spoken by our Lord, and addressed particularly to the Pharisees. The Pharisees are described as very strict observers of the letter of the law, in their outward conduct, but as

neglecting its spirit entirely, and, indeed, very wicked at heart. They were covetous, and endeavored to justify themselves before men; but their hearts were far from God. They were admonished by the Saviour that 'that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God;' and he dealt with them very plainly and affectionately, in his efforts to show them their own hearts; but his efforts were vain. Their eyes were blinded by unbelief, and they not only sought every means of opposing the mission of the Saviour, but they reviled and derided him. But, as saith St. Peter, 'the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward; not willing that any should perish;' and he spoke these words with special reference to this very case; for he was present, and heard and saw the whole. As a last effort, the blessed Jesus opened up the future to their gaze, and reminded them that the praise of men, or the wealth of the world, would avail little when men had passed into the spirit land. The question there will not be, what was the social position, in this world, of the spirit arraigned at God's bar, but what was his moral state? It is unimportant whether this relation of Christ is regarded as a narrative of real facts, or as a parable only. He undoubtedly meant to teach the principles upon which the future state of immortal spirits will be determined. This is evident from the indisputable fact, that the whole relation refers to a period after death. The rich man and the beggar had both died. The rich man opened his eyes in torment, while the poor man found a place

in Abraham's bosom—that is, a holy happy home where Abraham dwells! And, again, they were separated by a great gulf, which was impassable, even in answer to prayer. 'I pray thee, therefore,' is the rich man's bitter cry 'have mercy on me!' These circumstances could not have been represented as passing here.

"We should not forget that these things can be taught by none but Christ; he only came down from Heaven, and he only can speak of what he knows concerning these things. But though the Saviour addressed the Pharisees eighteen hundred years ago, his words are designed to admonish and instruct us. We may learn from this subject that 'God is no respecter of persons;' that with him there is no distinction between rich and poor, but that all will be judged by the same standard at last. We may learn, further, that death comes to all alike, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, and, I may add, the young and the old: parents and children are all alike subject to the stroke of death. The most pleasant and endearing relations of life may be severed in a moment, and the happiest home be made desolate by his stroke.

"But the Saviour speaks of the soul as living after the body dies. Both the rich man and the beggar died, and the bodies of both were probably buried in the grave, though the burial of the poor man is not mentioned; still the Saviour distinctly speaks of the existence of their souls afterwards in a separate state. He informs us, too, in this place, that when death destroys the body, the soul immediately rises

to happiness or sinks to misery ; the poor man is found in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man lifts up his eyes, being in torment."

"Some persons profess to believe that there is no punishment for sin after death, but that all are then alike happy ; but the rich man, if he ever believed this notion, was sadly undeceived—he 'lifted up his eyes, being in torment.' Some, again, support the notion that the pious and the wicked both sleep insensibly in the grave until the resurrection. But the words of the Saviour in this place teach a different doctrine. The good man was carried by angels directly to Abraham's bosom, and the rich fool was at once dragged away to torment. Another very affecting thought suggested by the Saviour is, that the spirits of the dead, on leaving the world, not only enter at once upon a state of conscious happiness or misery, but feel a deep sympathy for their living friends whom they have left behind them. Said the miserable man amid the flame, 'I pray thee, therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send him (Lazarus) to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' Another lesson of great importance is here taught by the Saviour. I refer to what he says respecting the influence which a spirit from the invisible world, if permitted to revisit his acquaintances, would have upon the living. The word of God is all-sufficient. If sinners will not give heed to its teachings, it is because their hearts are so hopelessly hardened by unbelief that other measures would be vain. 'If they hear not Moses

and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' The Bible is our only guide, and if we will not obey its teachings we must be lost."

Such was the substance of my dear mother's conversation on that memorable Sabbath morning, and it was to me, young as I was, "like a nail driven in a sure place." The impression made upon my mind was deep and abiding, greatly affecting my feelings, and returning in after years as the echo of that blessed voice in admonition, warning and reproof.

I may mention the distinct impressions made upon my mind by my mother's reading and conversation :

1. I learned, from the final destiny of the rich man and Lazarus, as distinctly set forth by the Saviour, that all seeming inequality in this life will be fairly adjusted in the world to come.

2. That the state of men in the future life will depend upon their moral state when they are summoned away from this.

3. That the ultimate result depends upon their own conduct here, inasmuch as men are free agents, and ample provision is made for their final happiness.

4. That the Bible is the sure word of prophecy, and abundantly sufficient to guide the sinner in the way to Heaven.

5. That a special revelation, for those who give no heed to revealed truth, would be altogether in vain, for, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

These were the ideas that followed me. If I live and die without being reconciled to God, after all that he has done by his Word and is doing by his servants and by his Spirit, I shall go with the rich man to be tormented in that flame for ever; but if I listen to and obey the word of the Lord, I shall finally be found with Lazarus in Heaven. Life is short at best, and death generally unexpected; and there seemed a voice behind me, giving emphasis to these thoughts by the constant cry, "Prepare to meet thy God!"

In after life I met some who espoused the belief that the final destination of man is controlled by a decree of the Almighty, formed by him from eternity. That certain persons God had been pleased, without any reference to his foreknowledge of their moral character, to predestinate to eternal life, and that all others were given over equally from eternity to everlasting reprobation.

In meditating upon what the Saviour says of the rich man and the poor man, and in his description of the feelings of the former, when in torment, I could not help thinking that he not only died ignorant of this doctrine, but that Abraham, also, had not yet learned it. The rich man certainly supposed his brothers might escape the place of torment to which he had come, and Abraham certainly implies this belief in his statement of their freeness to believe the doctrines of life. And if this doctrine is true, I am persuaded that either Christ himself had not yet become acquainted with it, or else he wished to deceive the people; for he plainly

teaches, in this and in other places, that obedience to God's word will secure the salvation of the soul.

Not only from my own experience, but from the observation of more than forty years, I am convinced, that the earnest and prayerful efforts of parents to impart religious instruction to children are never lost. This seems, too, to have been the opinion of the wise man who said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."—Prov. xxii. 6. It may be that, to the eye of parental anxiety, the seed sown may seem to be unfruitful, and for long years it may not germinate; but that seed shall never perish. The wayward boy, breaking away from parental control, may drift with the world's current for years; but the sound of a pious father's voice, and the remembrance of a devoted mother's love, will haunt him amid scenes of vice and dissipation, and the ever-watchful Spirit of God may, at some favorable moment, apply the early-taught lessons to the heart, and the prodigal, though perhaps in some distant land, will start up, amid the swelling tears of true penitence, and say, in dependence on God, "I will arise and go to my father"

"Sow, in the morn, thy seed;
At eve hold not thy hand;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed;
Broadcast it o'er the land."

These are duties that religious parents will never forget, and even thoughtless worldly parents, if un-

willing or unable to impart right instruction to their children themselves, should be careful to introduce them early to some Sabbath School, where the want of home instruction may to some extent be atoned for, by the faithful labors of those engaged in the noble employment of Sabbath School teachers. It is not enough that parents provide for the mental culture of their offspring; their moral natures must be developed, and they must be taught the necessity of self-conquest, and a life of self-denying devotion, if they would escape ruin, and make their homes in Heaven. They should be faithfully warned and fully apprised that "Satan goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

At about this period in my history, a Sunday School was commenced about a mile from my father's residence, and though it was continued but for a short time, yet the effect of its influence upon myself confirms what I have said of the importance of early religious training. To this school I was sent, and I soon became much attached to my teacher, and greatly interested in the instruction given. My young heart was prepared as wax for the seal; and had I enjoyed privileges similar to those furnished by the Sunday Schools of this day, I cannot doubt that I should have found the Lord at a much earlier period than I did, and thus escaped many evils into which I subsequently fell. And I often think with sorrow of the days and years spent in wickedness and folly, which might have been given to the Lord's service, had some

one, at that early age, taken me by the hand and led me to Christ. More sad and solemn is the thought of the souls, now perhaps lost for ever, that I might have been, in that case, the honored instrument of turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Among the many lessons taught in that little Sunday School, that left an abiding impression upon my heart, was one founded upon the 2d chapter of the second book of Kings. It was designed to teach us the special providence that watches over those who seek God's glory and love his cause, and his stern purpose to protect his servants and punish his enemies. This chapter relates the circumstances connected with the translation of Elijah; the acknowledgment of Elisha as his successor; the dividing of the waters of Jordan; the healing of the unwholesome waters, and restoring fruitfulness to the land about Jericho; and the destruction, by bears, of the children that mocked him. This whole subject, simply and affectionately explained and applied, left a deep impression upon my mind. The incident, especially of the children and their terrible death, made me tremble at the thought of trifling with or ridiculing the things of God. And from that time to the present, I rarely see young persons thoughtless or trifling in the house of God, without reverting to the lesson I received in that little school-house, nearly half a century ago. At the period of which I now speak, my mind was under strong and decided religious influences, and I cannot doubt that, to me, it was a day of gracious

visitation, for the Spirit was reproving me "of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Oh, how much of sin and suffering I would have avoided had some one then thought it worth while to take the unnoticed boy by the hand, and carry him to the Saviour.

The Methodist people, from whom alone I might have received assistance, were, at that period, every where spoken against. Special reproach and scorn were heaped upon them, about this time, on account of a camp meeting, which was held by the Methodist colored people in the grove near Flushing. On Sunday the camp ground was the resort of all classes of the population. But few, however, seemed to me to attend for the purpose of receiving instruction or of worshipping God. The greater number went as to a horse-race or show, to see, be amused and make remarks. I remember much was said of the novelty of the scene and the enthusiasm of the people, but nothing whatever of their piety or the power of the religion they professed. Sneers and scoffing remarks were not spared; and I was left with the impression that they were an ignorant, outcast class of beings, who did not pretend to stand on the same level with those who kept pews in churches with steeples; and in fact I did not know that Methodist people went to church more than once a year, and then in the woods. It is true, I knew there was a building in the village called the Methodist "Meeting House," but it was a dingy affair, without paint, or steeple, or bell to invite the people there; and I did not know

that they ever came. I had had many curious speculations about this unfinished old house. I used to wonder who placed it there, or whether it had been built at all, or had grown up in that place and was partially decayed like some half rotten tree, that having been overthrown by the winds was now in process of rapid decomposition. Its gloomy silence used to half frighten me as I passed by it in the evening; and I silently consigned it to the possession of troops of rats and an occasional ghost. Still, I remember that at the camp meeting in the woods I had serious impressions arising from the zeal and evident sincerity, and especially from the heavenly singing of the people; and I have no doubt, that had my formal friends possessed one-half the earnestness of these despised colored people in serving the Lord, I should, at that time, have gladly followed them in the way to Heaven.

CHAPTER III.

THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF A COUNTRY GROCERY—LEARNING TO SMOKE TOBACCO AND DRINK RUM—IDLE HABITS—LEAVING HOME—SABBATH EMPLOYMENT—THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH AT HEMPSTEAD—THE EFFECT OF THE SERVICES—THE COLLECTION—INFORMATION OBTAINED AT CHURCH—A VISIT AT HOME—DECEPTION AND DRINKING—THE EFFECT OF ABSENCE FROM HOME—GO TO NEW-YORK—METHODISTS—PROVIDENCE—TOBACCO CHEWING—RETURN HOME—REMOVAL TO BROOKLYN—TO NEW-YORK—SHOE-MAKING—BLACKSMITHING—CARPENTER'S TRADE.

THE feelings awakened by my attendance at the camp meeting at Flushing gradually wore away, and, being exposed to many adverse influences, I rapidly acquired many bad habits. It is God's mercy alone that kept me from total ruin. My father was the proprietor of a country grocery, and, according to the almost universal custom of that period, he connected with his business the sale of ardent spirits. This made his place of business the resort of the idle and vicious; and the ears of his children were frequently shocked by hearing vulgar and profane conversation. Having access to rum, tobacco and segars, and seeing them used freely, I began, like a very foolish boy, to think it manly to indulge as others did; and I soon learned, when out of the sight of my parents, to smoke a segar and

drink a little rum. I was, in truth, taking rapid strides in the way to ruin, and was even now idle and lazy, and could smoke tobacco and drink intoxicating liquors. Alarmed, perhaps, at the prospect of my growing up an idle, worthless man, or because he had more help at home than he wanted, my father concluded, at the beginning of summer, to spare me from home, and placed me with a farmer at Rockaway, where I remained until the approach of winter. While at Rockaway my Sabbaths were generally spent along the sea shore; but sometimes I went with the family with which I lived to church at Hempstead, where they had a pew in the Protestant Episcopal church. On the first occasion of my attending church with them, quite an amusing incident occurred. It was the first time I had ever attended service in a church of that order, and instead of entering the house with the family, I tarried about the door. While lounging about, gazing at the people as they arrived, I suddenly heard a strange noise within the house. It was the noise made by the rising up of the congregation during service, and the responses made by them; but it was strange to me; and after listening a little time, I concluded they were hauling the seats about the floor, and arranging them for the accommodation of the audience. Seeing many people going up into the gallery, I thought I would go up there too; hearing less noise in that direction, I presumed the seats in that part of the house were already arranged. When I reached the head of the stairs, and heard the clergyman reciting the service

and the people responding in a grum, guttural voice, I learned the nature of the noise that I had at first taken for the dragging of the seats across the floor. I was pleased with the appearance of the church and congregation; the house was well furnished, clean and in good order; the pews were highly finished and of a beautiful color, and the, to me, strange ceremonies of the worship, highly gratified my curiosity. I observed every thing that occurred with great interest and satisfaction, until toward the close of the service, when I was startled by the circulation of the plates for the collection. I felt myself greatly embarrassed, and having no money, I looked about in every direction to discover the family with whom I had come to church, but I looked in vain. Every one, old and young, seemed to me to put something into the plate, and as the collectors drew near, my confusion and embarrassment were extreme. As a last resort, I appealed to a man sitting in the same seat with me, and asked him to lend me a penny, promising to repay him after church. In reply to my request, he told me, to my great relief, that I was not obliged to put any thing in the plate, whereupon I breathed freer and easier, and retired with the congregation, with the conviction that this was the only information I had received at church that day. I afterwards went occasionally to this church, but the forms and ceremonies left no impression upon my mind, nor do I remember that the preaching ever affected my heart. The whole service was to me cold and lifeless, and utterly without power to quicken my affections or deepen my religious feelings.

While residing at Rockaway, I sometimes passed the Sabbath at home. On these occasions I usually went home on Saturday evening and returned on Monday morning. On these excursions, a boy, somewhat older than myself, who was learning a trade at Rockaway, but whose parents resided near mine, was generally my companion. The circumstances connected with one of these visits at home are very fresh in my memory. We were very anxious to leave home on our return on Sunday afternoon, instead of Monday morning, for the purpose of having a good time with some boys who had agreed to go a part of the way with us. My companion, who was under less rigid control at home than I was, could generally go when he pleased, but it was necessary for me to obtain consent of my parents. This was the difficulty which we set ourselves to overcome, and which was accomplished in the following manner: The boys who had promised to accompany us, first set out in advance, and concealed themselves beyond a swamp, that no suspicions might be excited by our being seen together. Then the subject was introduced, and my parents requested to consent to my setting out upon my return. We stated that the afternoon was very pleasant and the morning might be stormy—that by going that day we could sleep at Rockaway, and be fresh and vigorous for work on Monday morning, whereas the journey on Monday morning would greatly fatigue us, and unfit us for labor for the day. Besides, we added, the employer of my companion needed his services early in the morning, before we

could get there if we tarried at home all night, and that it was necessary for him to return that afternoon. By such representations as these, we finally obtained consent, and set out on our Sunday afternoon's journey. We soon overtook the other boys, when we pursued our walk in high glee. They had provided themselves with a supply of segars, and having struck a light, each boy lighted one, and we went on our way rejoicing. All this was bad enough, but the end of the walk was worse than the beginning. On our way the road crossed a level meadow, where, for about a mile, there was no house. Before crossing this meadow, our companions concluded to turn back, and leave us to pursue our journey alone. The last house before reaching the meadow was to be their stopping place, and as this was a tavern, we thought it manly to go in and take a parting glass with our friends. The landlord himself was not visible, but we were waited upon by a female, from whose hand we each received some intoxicating liquor and a segar, and proceeded to drink and smoke. There were five of us, and before we went out, each one had "treated" the company with strong drink, to which was added a quart of cider, which was divided among us, as the farewell draught. All this took place in so short a time, that the effect of our potations was not visible upon us when we left the tavern, and parting at the door, proceeded on our way. For myself, I soon became much intoxicated, and deadly sick, and had not the stomach rejected its poisonous burden, I have no doubt I should have died that day, in a fit of drunk-

eness. As it was, I reached Rockaway pale and exhausted, and crept to bed, whence I arose the next morning a wiser if not a better boy.

This period from home was very injurious to me in many respects. I lived among those who cared little for my spiritual welfare, and took little interest in helping me form good moral habits. I was under little restraint on the Sabbath, not being required to attend church, and permitted, at my own election, to pass the day along the shore or in bad company. I acquired many evil habits, from the contaminating influence of which I should have been preserved had I remained under my father's eye or my mother's care. A taste for idle company, and especially a fondness for the ball-room, were developed in me, and serious thoughts, awakened under more favorable circumstances, were banished, so that I returned home not only unimproved but positively injured by my absence.

The next fall my father placed me in New-York with an elder brother, to learn the shoemaker's trade. He was very strict, and indeed severe with his apprentices, and as in this respect I fared like the rest, I soon became dissatisfied and returned home. But during the few months which I remained, several things occurred which I ought to mention. The most important, perhaps, is that I was brought somewhat into connection with the people called Methodists. Though my acquaintance with them was very slight, extending but little further than a knowledge of their name, yet an impression was left upon my mind, which ultimately brought me into

church fellowship with them, and to the saving knowledge of Christ crucified. My brother resided not far from the Methodist church in Broome-street, in the city of New-York, and I had sometimes the opportunity of hearing the Methodist preachers and attending their prayer meetings. The zeal and fervor of the people, and the plain, practical preaching of the Word made a deep and favorable impression upon my mind, and I was satisfied if God had a people on earth, those who met there belonged to his family. My brother's family, and my brother in particular, regarded them lightly, and looked upon them as a low and despised class, and would never allow me to go among them alone, but my impressions concerning them followed me for months. My religious emotions were somewhat quickened, also, about this time, by an occurrence, which, but for the interposition of Providence, had probably ended my life in a sudden and unexpected manner. The shop in which we worked was much infested with rats, and one of the workmen whose seat was in front of my own, having procured a pistol, was accustomed to amuse himself by firing at them when they appeared. Having one day discharged his pistol, he was called out into the store before he had time to reload it. Boy like, I took the weapon from the drawer, where he had placed it, reloaded and replaced it before his return. When he came back to his seat, he took out his pistol, and supposing it to be still unloaded, suddenly presented it to my breast and pulled the trigger. Providentially it snapped. Had it gone off, I should probably,

nay, almost certainly have been killed, as the pistol was loaded with ball and the muzzle within half a yard of my breast. This circumstance taught me two important lessons, the uncertainty of life, and caution in the handling of fire-arms.

While in New-York on this occasion, I acquired the vile habit of chewing tobacco, a practice which clung to me for years. I shall here only note the beginning of this habit, designing to give my views upon it more at large when I come to speak of my conflicts with and final victory over it.

Disliking what I thought the sternness of my brother's control, I determined to leave him, and returning home, my younger brother took my place on the bench, while I resumed labor on the farm. For this work I continued to have a decided dislike. My trials in this respect were not, however, of long continuance, for in my fifteenth year, or in the spring of 1826, to my great satisfaction, my father abandoned farming and removed to Brooklyn. His stay in Brooklyn was, however, short, for six months afterwards he moved to 69 Clinton-street, New-York, where he opened a grocery, and continued to reside until his death, which took place about two years afterwards.

During our stay in Brooklyn I worked at shoe-making, and when we moved to New-York, my father placed me under special instruction, that I might become a finished workman. But I was not satisfied; my habits of idleness and my dislike of work still clung to me, and I finally concluded that I did not like the business, but would prefer the

blacksmith's trade. To gratify me, my father consented to the change, and obtained a place for me, where, after blowing the bellows and swinging the sledge for a few months, I found out that I was not yet pleased, and abandoned the new business. The cause of this restlessness and vacillation I have more than once suggested. I had no love for work, but was in truth idle and lazy, and now experienced the evil consequences of not having early formed systematic habits of industry.

After a period of idleness, I finally concluded that I preferred the carpenter's trade, and having a brother who was carrying on that business, I formed a desire to engage with him and learn his trade. Having announced this wish to my father, he readily assented to my wishes, but the consent of my brother was not so easily obtained. He knew me, and was acquainted with my restless and changeable disposition, as well as my dislike for work, and was very unwilling to agree to my wishes. He knew, also, without doubt, that he could readily procure a boy of greater promise, and one that would probably give him less trouble and anxiety ; but after many promises on my part, of steadiness and fidelity, he at last yielded, and I went with him to learn the carpenter's trade, in the eighteenth year of my age.

CHAPTER IV.

MY FATHER'S DEATH—PRIMITIVE METHODISTS—CLASS MEETINGS—RELIGIOUS COMFORT—RELAPSE—OPPOSITION AT HOME—SAD CONDITION OF THE BACKSLIDER—GOES BACK TO THE WORLD.

A FEW weeks after this arrangement was completed, my father died. This event, though not entirely unexpected, occurred very suddenly. He had, for several years, been in delicate health; but for a short time before his death, he was thought to be so much better that hopes were cherished by his family of his complete restoration. Under the belief that his health was improving, we had gone out to our labor on the morning of the day of his death; but we were suddenly recalled by the intelligence that he was dying. We hastened home, and found the family gathered round the bed, where a kind father and an affectionate husband was struggling with the last great enemy. The scene was a very affecting one. The weeping mother, about to be left a widow, mingled her tears and lamentations with those of her children—all evidently deeply moved by the circumstances before them; but as for myself, I seemed insensible to the sadness and solemnity of the occasion; and until my return from the funeral, the next day, seemed to myself, even now, to have been almost entirely destitute of feeling. Then, as I missed my father from the family

circle, I began to realize our loss ; and the tide of feeling beginning to rise in my heart, I sought a place in which to weep. The solemn and affecting lesson which had been read to us, left an abiding impression on my memory and my heart. I began to reflect not only upon our loss, but upon the uncertainty of life. My own mortality and my utter unfitness for death startled and alarmed me. I saw that I was exposed every hour ; and when I reflected upon my past life, I felt that I was without God and without hope in the world, and that as there was but a step between me and death, so I was walking every hour upon the verge of everlasting woe. These convictions came home to my heart with such pungency and power, that worldly amusements lost their charm, and I had no rest. After a time I sought the society of Christians at various places of religious worship ; but I continued restless and unsatisfied. One place to which I was accustomed to resort was in Houston-street, near the East River, in what was then called the Eastern Hall. At this place a company of "Primitive Methodists" met for worship, and their simplicity and fervor deeply interested me. The apparent humility and the holy earnestness of the preacher convinced me that he was a man of God ; and his word came home to my heart in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. I was thoroughly awakened and truly penitent, inquiring in my heart, with all sincerity, "What must I do to be saved ?" One Sunday afternoon, while I continued in this frame of mind, I repaired to the hall at the time of

service, and listened to the message of the preacher with sighing and tears. At the close of the preaching, the congregation was invited to remain for a prayer meeting. Having been much affected during the sermon, I had probably attracted the attention of the preacher, for he came to me soon after the prayer meeting commenced, and, with much kindness, inquired, whether I loved Jesus. I felt my heart strangely moved by this simple question; and even now, after the lapse of so many years, as I make the record, the feeling I then experienced is, in some measure, revived. There comes stealing over my heart the remembrance of that eventful hour when my interests for time and eternity hung trembling in the balance. And as I think of my situation then, so full of peril, and reflect upon the great things that God has done for me since that period, my heart swells with gratitude, and my eyes fill with tears. A young man, surrounded by all the temptations and perils of a large city, with none among my own kindred to instruct or control me, I could say with the Psalmist, "No man cared for my soul;" and it seems to myself passing strange that God should have "brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings," or "put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

To the affectionate inquiry of the preacher, "Do you love Jesus?" I was compelled to answer in the negative; and covering my face with my hands, I strove to repress my tears. Dear reader, consider

this question now proposed to you, "Do you love Jesus? Have you given him your heart?" If you, too, must answer in the negative, conceive the words of the preacher to be addressed to you. I had no sooner replied to his question than, with a low, soft voice, and in accents of inexpressible sorrow, he continued, "Why, why, my brother, do you not love Jesus? Did you not know that his love for you brought him from Heaven to earth, from happiness to suffering, from honor to dishonor, from life to death? Did you not know, that though he was rich, yet, for your sake, he became poor, that you, through his poverty, might be rich? Did you not know that, having risen from the grave and ascended on high, he now, at this very moment, intercedes for you at the right hand of the Father? I am sure you have not reflected on all he has done and suffered for you, or you would have loved him." In language like this he addressed me a few moments, and then invited me to seek Jesus in prayer at the altar—where several had already bowed in penitence and tears. With trembling steps, a broken heart and streaming eyes I approached the spot, and there earnestly sought the pardon of my sins through the atoning blood of the Saviour. Several brethren prayed for me; but the meeting closed, and I had yet no evidence of my acceptance with God. Before I left, the preacher invited me to unite with a class. After making some inquiries with respect to its nature and design, I gave him my name as a member of his class, and returned home. Upon reviewing the scenes through which

I had passed, I was thankful for the grace and strength which had enabled me to take up the Cross and publicly seek reconciliation with God ; but I was persuaded that I had but commenced the work, and that I had not yet received the forgiveness of sin. I felt, however, a strong determination to go forward, and when the time for the class meeting arrived, I was punctually present. This meeting was held in a part of what, I think, was called the Essex-street Academy, which stood on the corner of Essex and Stanton streets. When the leader addressed me, I told him as nearly as I could what were my feelings and desires. I stated that I was earnestly seeking, but had not yet found the forgiveness of sin ; that I was anxious to receive instruction, and desired the prayers of the people of God. He instructed me to continue in the use of the means of grace ; to watch and pray, with the confident expectation that the promises of the Lord would be verified speedily in my case. He faithfully aided me in searching my own heart, and in endeavoring to discover what obstacle prevented my reception of the blessing I sought. I was somewhat relieved from the sad burden under which I groaned, but I left the meeting unsatisfied, and still a stranger to the pardoning grace of God. For six or eight weeks I continued a faithful attendance upon this class meeting as an earnest seeker of religion, and my cry continued to be—

“O for a heart to praise my God—

A heart from sin set free !”

I strove, also, at home, to follow the advice given me by watching against temptation, and seeking every opportunity to pour out my soul in prayer to God ; but I seemed to make little progress in grace, and was compelled to report, week after week, that I earnestly desired, but had not yet obtained salvation.

During this period, however, I was not without some religious comfort, and my heart was somewhat encouraged. I learned to love the brethren, and to take considerable satisfaction in the discharge of religious duties, but my heart longed for some more conclusive evidence of my acceptance with God. I had found in the Scriptures the glorious assurance "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," and "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself;" and similar Scripture quotations, which I had heard among my Methodist friends, inspired me with the earnest desire of obtaining a stronger, more abiding and satisfying evidence of my conversion to God. But alas ! before I received this assurance of my salvation, I turned aside to vanity, and relapsed into a fearfully hardened and sinful state of mind. In searching for the causes which led to this awful result, truth compels me to relate what inclination suggests had better be suppressed. But the hope that a faithful report of the circumstances as they occurred may prove an admonition to those who assume the awful responsibility of setting themselves in opposition to the truth, by hedging up the way of awakened sinners, or tempt-

ing them to abandon the way of God's commandments, constrains me to deal honestly and faithfully both with my readers and the facts and circumstances of my experience. The principal difficulties with which I had to contend, sprung up in the bosom of my own family. Worldly honor and respectability were there held in high esteem, and while little objection would have been made to my attendance upon the religious services of some other denomination, or even to my seeking church fellowship with them, Methodism was denounced, and my communion with the despised people bitterly opposed and condemned. I do not design to condemn the motives of any one by these remarks. Methodism was then little known, and with that people it was a day of comparatively small things. And those who judged of the merits of a cause from its popularity, were liable to be deceived. In opposing my association with the Methodist people, however, my relatives made the sad mistake of assailing practical piety itself. And bitterly hostile did they show themselves to the work of God in my heart, and sad indeed were the results which followed. The principal agent of this opposition was a brother, who seemed to seek every means of annoying me and hindering my progress. On one occasion he followed me to my chamber, to which I had retired with my Bible to read and pray, where he employed every means to irritate and provoke me. Myself, Methodism, and even the precious Bible, were in turn subjected to insult and abuse. Though over this scene my brother wept bitterly in after years, and was, I

doubt not, forgiven, yet he succeeded in arousing my angry passions on the occasion, so that the spirit of God was grieved, my religious enjoyment languished and died out, and I soon afterwards returned to my old associations. The class meetings, the prayer meetings, and the preaching of the Word were neglected, and my Bible cast aside; the Sabbath was profaned, and my heart became a very sink of iniquity, while my life illustrated the truth of the Saviour's description of the backslider, "then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Luke, xi. 26. Alas! alas! it seemed to me that no language could so graphically describe my dreadful condition. Seven other spirits more wicked than the first, seemed literally to have taken possession of my heart. The apartments, "swept and garnished," from which the spirit of good had departed, were far more commodious for the spirits of evil that came to resume possession. It seemed to me that originally my heart had been contracted and shut up, but that the Lord had opened it as he did the heart of Lydia, and that under the genial and renovating influence of grace it had become greatly enlarged, and, like a well-watered garden, was bringing forth herb and flower, with the cheering promise of abundant fruit. When, however, I had yielded to temptation, and sinned against God, by abandoning all efforts for salvation, and relapsing into former habits, it was as though a blast from the mouth of a furnace had swept over this fair

picture, and dried up and consumed every green thing. Oh, what havoc and desolation ! The soil that had been prepared, and in which the good seed was springing up with so much promise, was now destitute of all good ; the green blade had given place to tares of vigorous growth, and to noxious weeds, which sprung up in rank luxuriance. The results were evil, only evil, and that continually. I had suffered unspeakable loss, but had received no compensation whatever myself, nor had others profited by my fall. When the Temple, at Jerusalem, was destroyed by wicked men, they had some excuse in the plunder which they sought. Achan had some motive for his disobedience, in the attractiveness of the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold ; but here neither the tempter nor the tempted gained any advantage. It was loss, loss, all loss.

My condition was lamentable and fearful. I had been weighed in the balances and found wanting. All the precious promises from which I had derived consolation and hope were mine no longer. My comfort had departed, and, in its place, there was only a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. In this sad condition I plunged anew into sin, and soon became notorious for profanity and contempt of sacred things.

CHAPTER V.

ADMONTION TO THE READER—RAPID ADVANCE IN SIN—
PROFANITY—THE POWER OF HABIT—HAIL ON SWEAR-
ING—CONTEMPT OF THE MEANS OF GRACE—MEETINGS
IN FORSYTH-STREET—WICKED CONDUCT THERE—ITS
RESULTS.

THE concluding statement of the last chapter will perhaps seem incredible to Christians who have never departed from their first love. But those who have fallen into temptation, and, like Peter, denied their Lord, with profanity and scorn, will know both how to believe the literal truth of my narrative, and to sympathize with those who, from a state of grace, fall away into sin. Reader, hast thou, in word or deed, denied thy Lord? Has the Spirit of God departed from thee? Thou art in peril! Seven other spirits, worse than the first, who walk through dry places, seeking rest and finding none, wait to make their home in thy heart. For thy soul's sake, eat not, sleep not, until thou hast gone to the throne of grace, with strong crying and tears, and poured out thy heart to God for mercy and forgiveness. Remember the blessed words: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father."

Oh, my friend! couldst thou foresee the bitterness and sorrow thou art treasuring up for thyself, thou wouldst call earnestly upon thy God to heal

thy backslidings, and restore thee to the joys of his salvation.

For nearly a whole year I continued in a state of enmity to God, practically illustrating the saying of the Apostle Peter, "The dog is turned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." During this period I was visited with seasons of deep conviction; but I hardened my heart against God, and earnestly resisted the strivings of his Spirit. All the evil propensities of my nature revived with wonderful intensity, and I was preparing rapidly for the commission of any sin. A few weeks only after my fall, in consequence of a half-playful assault by one of my acquaintances, I found myself premeditating murder* in the house of God—with such fearful rapidity had I progressed in sin—and I have no doubt I was prepared to take the life of my assailant, had a favorable opportunity presented itself. Meanwhile my vile habit of profane swearing fearfully increased. One day, while at work in the shop, one of the hands spoke with me on this subject, and told me I was one of the worst swearers with whom he had ever worked. It was difficult to believe that I was so totally abandoned to this dreadful habit; but circumstances proved that I was not myself conscious of the depth of my fall. One of my shopmates proposed that we should all

* I have no idea that I should have made any attempt to kill my assailant, but thoughts of doing so passed through my mind while excited by his assault and under great temptation.

enter into an agreement not to swear, under the penalty of a blow, to be inflicted by the one who happened to be nearest to the violator of the law at the time of his transgression. To this proposition I readily agreed, intending to watch myself carefully, while I exacted the full measure of the penalty from the rest. But a very few minutes, however, had elapsed before I received a rousing blow. Angrily demanding the cause, I was told that I had transgressed the new law by swearing. This I peremptorily denied, for so wedded to the vile practice had I become, that my most ordinary language was mingled with profane oaths, without my being aware of it. But my assailant proved his charge by the testimony of the rest, and I was obliged to submit, though with a very ill grace. My punishment for the violation of this law was so continuous and severe that I was compelled to petition for its repeal, as it seemed to me that my tongue was actually beyond my control. Like the boy who excused himself for whistling in school on the plea that "it whistled itself," so my tongue and lips had become so habituated to the expression of profane and blasphemous words, that they seemed to give utterance to them without the consent of the will, and to swear themselves. Though I had reached this "bad eminence" in sin, let no one suppose that I was not terribly accountable for my wickedness. Though I seemed scarcely to consent to the transgression, yet I was alone responsible for the formation of the vile habit which now held me a slave with the force of a giant.

The practice of using the name of God on slight and trivial occasions is in direct opposition, not only to the decalogue so solemnly given to man, but also to a variety of other passages which identify the character of God with his name. And hence, it is manifest that the whole spirit of the passages respecting the name of God is applicable, in its full weight, to the subject before us, and directly militates against the practice we are now condemning. Says a wise man now gone to his reward, "The practice of taking the Lord's name in vain is not only a great indication of want of reverence for God, but is calculated to wear out all serious religion from the mind. The effects of associating the most awful words, expressive of religious objects, with every thing which is mean and degrading, is adapted, in the highest degree, to sink them into contempt. He who has reflected the least on the laws of the human mind must be aware of the importance of association, or of that principle, in consequence of which, ideas and emotions which have been frequently presented to the mind, at the same time naturally recall each other. It is by virtue of this law of nature, principally, that habits are formed, and that the links which connect things in the memory are constituted. By virtue of this it is, that objects which have been frequently presented along with ludicrous and ridiculous circumstances acquire a character of ridicule. Hence the art of turning persons or things into ridicule, is to place them in juxtaposition with what is low and trivial; in consequence of which, the emotion of

contempt excited by the latter is made to adhere to the former, and stamps them with a similar character. These remarks, obvious as they are, may be sufficient to evince the pernicious effect of taking the Lord's name in vain. Though it is not the formal design of those who indulge this practice to turn the most sacred objects into ridicule, it perfectly answers that purpose, as much as if it were their professed intention.

The practice whose evils we are endeavoring to point out will be more certainly productive of that effect, because it is usually connected with a total absence of the mention of God on all other occasions. Among this description of persons, the name and attributes of the Supreme Being and the punishments of eternity are rarely, if ever, introduced, but in the way of profanation.

If the most awful terms in religion are rarely or never employed but in connection with angry or light emotions, he must be blind indeed who fails to perceive the tendency of such practice to wear out all traces of seriousness from the mind. They who are guilty of it are continually taking lessons of impiety ; and their progress, it must be confessed, is proportioned to what might be expected.

The criminality of taking the Lord's name in vain is enhanced by the absence of every reasonable temptation. It is not like many other vices, productive of either pleasure or emolument ; it is neither adapted to gratify any natural appetite or passion, nor to facilitate the attainment of a single end which a reasonable creature can be supposed

to have in view. It is properly the "superfluity of naughtiness," and can only be considered as a sort of pepper-corn rent, in acknowledgment of the devil's right of superiority. It is a vice by which no man's reputation is extended, no man's fortune is increased, no man's sensual gratifications are augmented. If we attempt to analyze it, and reduce it to its real motive, we find ourselves at a total loss to discover any other than irreligious ostentation, a desire of convincing the world that its perpetrators are not under the restraint of religious fear. But as this motive is most impious and detestable, so the practice arising from it is not at all requisite for that purpose, since the persons who persist in it may safely leave it to other parts of their character to exonerate them from the suspicion of being fearers of God. We beg leave to remind them that they are in no danger of being classed with the pious, either in this world or in that which is to come, and may therefore safely spare themselves the trouble of inscribing the name of their master on their foreheads. They are not so near to the kingdom of God as to be liable to be mistaken for its subjects.

Wedded to this abominable vice, and accustomed to interlard my ordinary conversation, on every occasion, with profane and blasphemous words, it will not surprise the reader to hear that I treated the means of grace, and sacred things in general, with utter contempt and scorn. But few have gone further than I was permitted to go in this direction. Yet even an act of extreme wickedness was, by a gracious Providence, overruled and indirectly made

the occasion of my salvation. Omitting the record of numerous acts of folly and sin, reference may be made to the incident referred to. I allude to it the more readily, as it was the last act of wilful and gross wickedness of which I have ever been guilty.

At the time of which I now speak, religious meetings were held by the Methodists on Saturday evenings, in an upper room, nearly opposite the present Forsyth-street church. The first part of the meeting was usually devoted to speaking of religious experience by the members of the church generally, and the latter part to prayer and religious advice to seekers of religion, by the older members of the church. One Saturday evening, my brother and myself, with a young man who boarded with us, went to this meeting. My companions found seats near the door, while I went further down the room, and seated myself at some distance from them. The exercises of the meeting were conducted in the usual manner, and nothing particular occurred during the time occupied in speaking, but when the prayer meeting was about to commence, an invitation was given to those who desired salvation to come forward for prayers. Quite a large number accepted the invitation and went forward, while the brethren seemed earnestly engaged, and a powerful religious influence was evidently present. As the meeting progressed, several warm-hearted members went round in the congregation to converse with those who seemed serious, and endeavor to prevail upon them to decide to seek the Lord. Under these

circumstances, such was the depravity of my heart, that I could attempt to ridicule the solemnity of the occasion. Here, thought I to myself, is a chance for sport. So, pretending to be under exercise of mind, I leaned forward on the seat before me, and concealed my face in my hands. My attitude was soon perceived, and one of the brethren taking a seat by my side, began to talk with me about the state of my soul, and endeavored to persuade me to unite with the mourners in seeking the Lord. I pretended to be deeply affected, but declined to go forward. Apparently under the impression that an older person might succeed in persuading me, he called another brother, who seating himself on the other side of me, urged me to comply with the invitation, by many serious and affectionate appeals. After trifling with them awhile longer, I suddenly raised up my head, and replied with impudent flippancy, "Gentlemen, it is not necessary that you should trouble yourselves so much about me. I am not going forward until I get ready, and you may be sure that will not be to-night." "Shall we not pray for you?" inquired one of them. "You may do as you please about that," was my reply; "you pray for others, and I suppose I cannot hinder you from praying for me." After a moment's pause, they both left me, and continued their efforts with others, evidently considering me a hard, if not a hopeless case. We remained until the meeting closed, and then left for home.

On the way I inquired, "Did you see how finely I hoaxed those two old Methodists?" They answered

in the negative, whereupon I related the circumstances as they occurred, and repeated, with great glee, what had been said. To my great surprise, my brother seemed shocked by my recital, and when I had finished my story, he very seriously remarked, "*you may be sorry for this yet.*" I was silenced. By some mysterious power, his words took hold of my conscience with wonderful tenacity, and I was unable to shake off their influence. The past, with its follies and sins, rose up before me, the future looked gloomy and alarming, and there was within me "a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

Solomon says, "fools make a mock of sin;" and if mocking at sin be an evidence of folly, what shall be said of one who, like me, could deliberately ridicule holy men, who desired to do me the greatest service, mocking at sacred things, and treating with contempt the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ? Thoughts like these disturbed my peace, and I had little rest, until with contrition and penitence I had humbled myself before the Lord, and found pardon and forgiveness in the reconciling blood of Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW ERA—"YOU MAY BE SORRY FOR THIS YET"—GOOD RESOLUTIONS—WILLETT-STREET CHURCH—THE ALTAR—THE STRUGGLE—SUNDAY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE—THICK DARKNESS—THE VOW—THE VICTORY—SENSATIONS THEREUPON—ANTICIPATES OPPOSITION AT HOME—IS HAPPILY DISAPPOINTED—WORK OF GRACE IN THE FAMILY—ANOTHER SUNDAY SCHOOL EXPERIENCE.

I FEEL a sense of inexpressible relief as I enter upon a new era in my history. Hitherto I have written under the conviction of duty, what I have told with hesitation and reluctance. Gladly would I have avoided the confession I have made of the fearful wickedness into which I had fallen, but I felt it good to contemplate the "hole of the pit whence I had been digged;" and while my heart has glowed anew with gratitude to God for his forbearance and mercy, I have hoped that the faithful relation of my experience might encourage some soul fast bound in the chains of darkness and sin, to call mightily upon God, and struggle earnestly for deliverance.

While I thank my Heavenly Father for his wonderful mercy towards me, and rejoice in hope, I cannot contemplate the days and years in which I walked in the ways of folly and sin, without the deepest sorrow and grief. What precious opportu-

nities I have suffered to pass unimproved! Had I early entered the service of the Redeemer, how much more would the Christian graces have been developed in my heart, and how much better prepared I should now be for usefulness in the church and the world! And, alas! how many hindered by my example are now perhaps beyond the reach of hope, who might otherwise be bright and shining lights among men, or dying, have left names like "ointment poured forth," to bless the church, and speak for the religion of our Lord.

Anxious to atone, as far as I may, for misspent time, and to gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost, I venture into the field of authorship, not from vanity or a desire of gain, but with the hope that my book may reach those to whom I may not speak, and thus enlarge the sphere of my own usefulness, and, as far as I can, benefit my fellow-men.

If it shall seem to any one that my account of my conversion is tedious or too minute, let it be my apology to say, that I deem it, incomparably, the most important epoch in my life; and as it is recorded for the benefit of my readers, I desire to make it so plain that it cannot be misunderstood. Should any one be encouraged by my experience to make an effort to work out his salvation, it is my earnest wish to show him how the good foundation may be laid—that foundation upon which, if a man build, neither tempest nor storm shall carry his house away.

I resume my history on the evening mentioned

in the last chapter, as we were on our way home from the meeting in Forsyth-street—the 26th of February, 1831. “You may be sorry for this yet,” said my brother, when I related my wicked and thoughtless conduct in the prayer meeting. Though he spoke with some degree of levity, his words thrilled through me, and were as a nail driven in a sure place, and fastened by the Master of assemblies. Terror and alarm took hold upon me. Conscience was aroused, and fearful apprehensions made me afraid. These feelings followed me home, and into my chamber. Sleep fled from my eyes, and I was tormented all night. The next day, being the Sabbath, was spent seriously and in close attendance at church. When evening arrived, I had resolved to seek the Lord, and lead a new life. This determination I had communicated to no one however, desiring, like many others under similar circumstances, to conceal from my intimate acquaintances my deep concern of mind.

Under the influence of this feeling, I inquired of my brother, who had been with me to church during the day, where he intended to go in the evening. He replied, “to Allen-street.” Whereupon I observed that I thought I should go to Willett-street. It afterwards appeared that my brother was also awakened, and had determined, that evening, to go to the altar for prayers; but, like me, he was anxious not to have his feelings known; and, on this account, he wished to separate himself from me. The truth is, we were mutually afraid of each other. How often is this the case with awakened

sinner ! Brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, parents and children, are afraid of each other, and stand in each other's way. We can know little of each other's hearts ; but the only way of safety is to go forward boldly in the path of duty ; and, in a majority of instances, we shall find that our apprehensions of ridicule and opposition are baseless, and that others, instead of hindering our progress, will be more likely to be influenced by our example and follow us to the footstool of divine mercy.

My brother and myself, however, separated ; he went to Allen-street and I went to the Willett-street church. I was much excited, and sat trembling during the preaching, thinking constantly of going to the altar when the prayer meeting commenced. When the time arrived, the invitation was given, and many went ; but, under the influence of powerful temptation, I hesitated, and sat trembling upon my seat until the meeting was dismissed. I went on my way home with an agitated, but heavy heart—the words still ringing in my ears, “You may be sorry for this yet.”

My brother's careless prediction had already been fulfilled. I was sorry for my act of folly and sin ; and the groans and tears of another wakeful night testified my grief. I was greatly troubled that I had not gone forward for prayers. I was conscious that by my refusal I had again grieved the Holy Spirit, and was tempted to believe that my sins were too great to be forgiven.

The next day I assumed a cheerfulness I was far from feeling, lest my seriousness should be ob-

served, and I be suspected of being penitent. At this time, protracted meetings were in progress in many of the churches, and, among others, at Willett-street. Anxious to attend, and yet unwilling that my anxiety should be known, I recollected an errand to be done in a store near the church; and I made this the excuse to the family for my absence during the evening. As soon as I got away from home, I hastened to the church, and took my place in the congregation. And now, again, temptation beset me in a new shape. Soon after I seated myself, I observed, near me, several persons with whom I was acquainted, and it suddenly occurred to me that I had heard them say that persons who became Methodists were either scared out of their senses or dragged to the altar by force. The remembrance of this remark perplexed and troubled me during the preaching, and I half resolved not to go to the altar, lest they should say I had been frightened or forced there. However, when the prayer meeting commenced, and sinners were invited to kneel at the altar for prayers, I knew not what to do. I trembled exceedingly; and my agitation being observed by one of the members, he came and besought me to go forward and give myself to the Lord. I was still hesitating, when another approached me on the other side, and united in urging me to accept the invitations of mercy, and offer my heart to God. Finally, as a last excuse, I told them I could not go forward that night, as I had an errand at a store, which would be shut before the meeting would close, and that I must leave so soon

that it was not worth while to accept their invitation that night. One of these kind brethren then began to reason with me on the importance of the step he urged me to take, and the expediency of an immediate decision. In the kindness of his heart he stated, that if we were ever so situated that two duties seemed to press upon us for immediate attention, and one must be neglected, it must be right to do that which was most important, and the neglect of which would be most injurious. He then argued that no other duty could compare in magnitude with that of seeking pardon for sin, and that I should consequently be wise to set about it without delay. He added, if I was afraid to go to the altar, he would accompany me himself, and cover me with his cloak. Finally, I consented to go ; but as I was on the point of starting, I again thought of my acquaintances, to whom I have referred ; and the fear that they would report me at home, made me again hesitate. My new friends did not give me up, (may God reward them for their patience and fidelity,) but continued to plead with me. Finding that if I went at all, it would require an earnest exercise of self-denial to overcome my inclination, I took the firm resolution —“I will arise and go to my Father ;” and with strong determination I rose from my seat. “Shall we go with you?” said one of those who had been speaking to me. Remembering, at the moment, the saying of one of those present, that none went forward for prayers unless scared or dragged up, I suddenly determined he should find in my case no excuse for repeating this remark ; and to the

question of my kind friends I answered, no; and walking steadily forward to the altar, I bowed in genuine brokenness of heart with other penitents who were crying for mercy. My advance to the altar seemed to bring me into the immediate presence of God, and I felt like one who pleads before a visible judge, expecting, every moment, the stroke of justice. The deep fountain of feeling within me was broken up, and, with gushing tears, I struggled for mercy. But the meeting closed, and my overburdened heart felt no relief. I felt a sense of satisfaction that I had gone to the altar and done what I could; but I was yet in the pit of mire and clay, and a power of thick darkness was upon me. The night that followed was again a restless one; and the following day was one of anxiety and prayer. The night succeeding (Tuesday) I was again at Willett-street, and when the prayer meeting commenced, I found I had gained some advantage over my enemies, for former temptations did not assail me; and I went forward to the altar with little hesitation or delay. But little variety occurred in my experience. I continued much in secret prayer, earnestly beseeching God, for Christ's sake, to pardon my numerous and aggravated sins, going steadily to the altar every night, until the close of the week. On Saturday evening the usual sermon was omitted—the time occupied in its delivery being employed in speaking by different members of the church—after which, the prayer meeting for penitents was held. I had gone to this meeting greatly debilitated. Loss of sleep and anxiety of

mind had re-acted upon the body, and I felt exhausted, and almost discouraged. Still, when the prayer meeting commenced, and penitents were invited to the altar, I again went forward and knelt with the others. My feelings at that time are indescribable. I groaned and wept aloud, and the very pains of hell got hold upon me. Finally, towards the close of the meeting, realizing my own utter helplessness, and beginning to despair of pardon, I raised my head and looked hopelessly towards the brethren in the altar. A moment afterwards one observed to another, loud enough for me to hear, "that is a true penitent," to which the other assented. This remark suggested to me the way of faith. If, said I to myself, I am truly penitent, (and that I am so, my own heart bears me witness,) then pardon is promised to me; for it is written, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy." As if inspired by this thought, I began to trust in the atonement of Christ, and casting myself upon the Lord, my faith gathered strength, and darkness and doubt began to flee away. At that moment, though my eyes were closed, I seemed to discern a glorious light like an opening vision of Heaven approaching, and beginning to fill the chambers of my heart with gladness and joy. I had forgotten where I was; the congregation and surrounding circumstances were unregarded; but partially opening my eyes my recollection returned, and the tempter seized that moment to rob me of the victory. This, said I, is conversion; I am losing my strength, and shall fall or make myself ridicu-

lous in some way. Instantly, as this fear took possession of my mind, the vision vanished, and all was gloom and darkness. The re-action was fearful. I could scarcely command myself, and was tempted to swear that I would abandon all efforts to secure salvation. I was angry with God, myself and all around me; and my heart at that moment was harder and more wicked than ever before. In this state of mind I left the church, when the meeting closed, and returned home with as much composure as if I had taken no interest in the exercises, or had never felt the slightest concern on account of sin. I retired to rest, slept soundly, and awoke the next morning with the same strange indifference. It was the Sabbath, and I had promised a young Sunday school teacher to go with him to Sunday school that day. He was punctual to his engagement, and I adhered to my promise, and went with him both morning and afternoon. Nothing of particular importance occurred during the morning session, but in the afternoon the superintendent gave me charge of a class—the regular teacher of which was absent. All went on very smoothly until towards the close of the exercises, when fifteen minutes were devoted by the teachers to giving private religious instruction to the members of their classes. This was a duty I had not anticipated, and for the discharge of which I felt very poorly prepared. The announcement of what was expected took me entirely by surprise, and I felt greatly disposed to avoid the duty by running away. But I saw no favorable opportunity for this, and looking round

and seeing the teachers engaged in conversation with their classes, I thought I would undertake the task, and began at once to talk religiously to those under my instruction, as well as I knew how. The bright-eyed boys, young as they were, soon discovered my ignorance, and from sly mischievous glances between themselves, they soon broke out into open laughter. I was greatly mortified; and bowing my head and covering my face with my hands, I wished myself out of the Sunday School, or that the exercises might soon close. In fact, the afternoon session of the school had nearly terminated, and without much further delay I was released from my awkward situation.

During the day I had of course thought about the occurrences of the past week, and as the hours passed, I found them occupying my mind more and more. I reflected upon the many times I had gone to the altar, and upon the hopes I had cherished of obtaining the evidence of sins forgiven. I even dwelt with satisfaction upon the measure of comfort I had really enjoyed, and felt satisfied that but for the fear of being laughed at, I should have obtained what I had so earnestly sought. I shrunk with exceeding sensitiveness from the thought of making myself the scoff and jest of my ribald acquaintances, and was tempted entirely to abandon all efforts for salvation. But the Spirit of God strove powerfully with me, and I was not given up to hardness of heart and unbelief. As the evening drew on, I became more and more exercised and agitated. After tea my anxiety increased, until a

sort of premonition of some impending calamity took possession of my mind, and I could not shake off the conviction, that in some way God was about to come out in judgment against me, and that my eternal destiny was at hand. Startled by a poignant sense of immediate peril, I hastened to my chamber, threw myself upon my knees, and most solemnly promised God, that from that hour I would not cease to seek his face and favor, in the use of every known means of grace—that were my years many or few, they should be consecrated to the great work of saving my soul alive. I made this solemn pledge with a strong conviction that I should perish in my sins, for I did not believe it possible that God could forgive so great a sinner as I felt myself to be. Still I determined, on my knees, (and asked God to witness my vow,) that I would pass my life in penitence and prayer, while I would faithfully avail myself of every known means of grace. When the hour for service arrived, I repaired to the church in a state of mind bordering upon despair, but yet resolved, so far as I could, to try and do my duty. During the preaching my feelings were not sensibly changed, my heart remaining so entirely unmoved, that my opinion grew stronger that I should never obtain the blessing of forgiveness. It may not be amiss to say, that my views of change of heart were even then very marked and decided. I had made up my mind, in my own case, to be satisfied with nothing short of the most conclusive evidence of the reality of the work. I had even earnestly desired such a proof

of my acceptance as would take away my bodily strength, and give to the spiritual man an undoubted triumph, and this I was convinced would alone satisfy me that I was accepted of God.

When the prayer meeting commenced, and the invitation to seekers was given, I went forward without any hesitation, in accordance with the vow I had made, to seek the Lord on every suitable occasion while life should last, or until I found peace in believing. After I reached the altar, many others came forward. A verse or two were then sung, and the invitation repeated until the altar was crowded with seekers. Now, said the preacher, let us unite in solemn, silent prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost. The brethren in the altar knelt down, and a solemn silence was observed by the hushed and praying congregation. I endeavored to join earnestly in the exercise. To avoid every disturbing influence, I raised my eyes above the pulpit, and tried to fix them steadily upon a particular place upon the wall. A discolored spot seeming to disturb me, I looked up to the ceiling, and fixing my gaze upon a smooth place, I began to plead with my whole soul, that for the sake of Christ I might then be saved. The struggle was earnest though short. A strange and singular influence came over me. It seemed to me that the ceiling opened, and that I rose up and went through it, but I cannot pretend to describe the scene that really took place. I soon forgot every thing around me, and knew nothing of what followed until I found myself sitting in the seat I had first occupied in the congregation, with

a firm hold on the back of the seat before me, shouting, at the top of my voice, Glory ! Glory ! Glory to God ! I was afterwards informed by those present, that as the power descended upon me, I went over backwards upon the floor ; then jumping up, I ran down the aisle to my former seat and seized the back of the one before me.

It may well be supposed that this scene made a sensation in the congregation. Some of the brethren gathered around me, and the preacher came and inquired if the Lord had blessed me. I answered that he had ; I did not have to guess about it, but spoke with assurance.

He then invited me to come forward to the altar, and tell the people what the Lord had done for me. I complied, and taking my stand at the spot where I had knelt, I urged sinners to the place where I had found Jesus.

I am aware that this statement will be ridiculed by the sceptic and the formalist, while the rationalist may endeavor to explain it from natural causes ; but as I believe that the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, so am I convinced that the power of God then descended upon my own heart. My darkness was dispelled, my doubts and fears fled away, and the peace that passeth understanding was bestowed upon me.

“ What we have felt and seen,
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men,
The signs infallible.”
4*

This great event in my history occurred about 9 o'clock in the evening, on Sunday, March 6, 1831, in the twentieth year of my age.

Wonderful was the change wrought in me. I not only felt constrained to praise God aloud, from the fulness of a glowing heart, but the very faces of the people around me shone like the faces of angels, and even the church itself seemed most glorious. These are the feelings that unlock the mystery of the poet's song—

“E'en prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there.”

Twenty-five years have rolled away since this period in my history, during which I have not ceased to thank God for his amazing mercy in that hour. But the meeting drew towards a close, and found me unwilling to depart. I felt, indeed, how truly I could sing,

“My willing soul would stay,
In such a place as this,
And sit and sing herself away,
To everlasting bliss.”

I felt, too, apprehensive that my faith might fail when I should be exposed to the temptations of the world; but in one thing I felt resolved, that come what might,

“I would no more my God forsake,
Nor cast his fear behind ;”

I remember, that as I left the church I ran on my

way home, that I might not lose the warmth and fervor of spirit I experienced. I anticipated strong opposition at home, for it was, after all, among the despised Methodists that I had found Jesus. When I reached home my embarrassment was greatly increased, by finding my eldest brother there from the country. I was more afraid of him than of all the rest of the family together, as he was much older than myself, and, as I believed, bitterly hostile to Methodism. I was greatly alarmed, and had no time to reflect upon what course I should take. In this state of uncertainty my conduct seemed very strange, as I simply shook hands with my brother, inquired after his health and that of his family, and then took a seat in silence, with my head bowed upon my hand. This strange conduct, with my occasional sighs, attracted the attention of the family, and my mother kindly inquired what was the matter. As I made no reply, she began to be alarmed, and the concern on my account soon became general. Meanwhile I debated in my own mind what duty required me to do. My heart throbbed wildly, and I could hear its pulsations, as that Scripture came distinctly to my remembrance, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's and of the Holy Angels."—Luke, ix. 26. As my mother repeated her inquiry, "John, what is the matter with you?" I sprung to my feet, and opened my heart before them all. I told them that I had been seeking and had found the Lord; that I had hesitated

to say so at first, through fear, but that the Lord had given me strength and boldness to confess him in their presence—then, with streaming eyes and a shout of glory to God, I left the room, and repaired to my own apartment, where I knelt down and prayed the Lord to forgive my act of momentary fear, and to confer upon me such grace and strength as would enable me, on all suitable occasions, to confess him before the world. I also besought God for grace to overcome the temptations and trials which might beset me in life, and that he would especially bring those who might oppose me to the knowledge of the truth.

The Lord graciously heard my prayers, for even the circumstances to which I have referred were blessed in a marked manner to the family, for several of them became serious, and soon after found peace in believing.

The work commenced with my brother Abraham, with whom I learned my trade. He was a house-carpenter, and was at the time carrying on business for himself. He was engaged in converting a store-house opposite our residence into dwellings, while I was employed by other parties, and was working in a back street not far off. On Saturday, the 12th of March following my own conversion, I had some work to put up in a distant part of the city, and the carman who had been engaged to carry it had his cart loaded and was prepared to start, when he found, that to make his load more secure, it would be well to change the position of one of his cart-rungs. Finding the rung too large, I took it and

ran round to Abraham's shop to cut it down to the proper size, leaving the carman to await my return. My brother Abraham was not in the shop, but I found another brother, older than myself, named Isaac, who was employed by Abraham, at work alone. While I was talking with him, and cutting down the cart-rung to its proper size, my sister came running into the shop in a state of high excitement, exclaiming, something is the matter with Abraham, come over to the house quickly! My first impression was, that he had been suddenly taken sick, or that some accident had occurred, but my brother, who suspected what was the matter, at once replied to her, "I am not going, I can tell you." His manner roused my suspicions, and recollecting that Abraham had been for some time under exercise of mind, the truth at once flashed upon me, and throwing down my work, I responded, "Well, I am going, I can tell you," and darting across the street, I rushed into the house. When I entered the room where the family were assembled, a strange and impressive picture presented itself. There stood my dear mother, in a fright, and Abraham, like a Saul of Tarsus, stricken down prostrate on the floor, under the power of God. Sinking upon my knees, I began to call aloud upon God for him, and in a moment the spirit descended upon me so copiously that I lost strength and consciousness. When I came to myself the room was thronged with the neighbors, who had heard of the occurrence, and come in, some to gratify a vain curiosity, and some to rejoice in the triumph of the cross. I

found myself lying beside my brother on the floor, and both he and myself were shouting, Glory to God. He had caught the tune I had lately learned to sing, and there seemed to my ear no discord in our song. We soon rose to our feet, and with arms about each other's necks, walked up and down the room, singing the songs of Zion, and shouting for joy.

Among those who came in were a Baptist minister and a man who, I was informed, was a Methodist class leader, and they both rejoiced with us and joined in our shouts of praise. At intervals the minister endeavored to improve the occasion, and we had exhortation, praising and prayer, with singing and shouting, and generally an intensely delightful season. In the midst of our enjoyment, while the flame was at the highest, my employer came in. Happening to pass along the back street, where I had left the carman some hours before, he discovered him, and inquired where I was. The carman stated the circumstances under which I had left; and he was now in pursuit of me. He at once addressed himself to me, and wished me to go over with the carman, saying, that I had kept him waiting nearly all the forenoon. As I hesitated, unable to tear myself away from my brother, my employer said, if I would only go over with the carman and have the work left in the proper place, I could then return and remain, if I wished to do so. But the spot was too precious, and I could not consent to leave. The scene appeared to me calculated to silence all opposition to the Gospel of Christ. The

work of grace in both myself and brother was so decided and thorough, and our joy so great, that it seemed to me no opposer could withstand the influence which surrounded us; but one of our own household was destined to prove how vain were my expectations. An elder brother came in during the height of our rejoicing, and with apparent indifference took a seat among us. The Baptist minister, of whom I have spoken, being acquainted with him, at once addressed him; but, notwithstanding the circumstances, he seemed unmoved. Whatever may have been the ultimate effect of his remarks, they seemed to make no impression upon him at the time. The day, however, passed gloriously on, and was the happiest I had ever enjoyed.

The next morning being Sunday, after much prayer, I went again to the Sunday School, of which I have spoken, and obtained the charge of the same class I had endeavored to instruct the Sunday preceding. It was a class of bad boys; but I hoped to exercise a good influence upon them. Their lesson was in the New Testament; but the particular portion I do not now remember. It mattered but little, however, to me what part we read, for with me it was all—"Thus saith the Lord." I was impatient to finish our reading lesson, as I longed to speak to them of practical piety and the love of God for sinners. When the reading was over, the boys evidently expected their work was done, but I at once began to talk with them of Christ and of their duty to love him, trying to make the impression upon their young minds that the real benefit of reading

the Scriptures was to understand and practice what we learned there.

But the boys remembered my embarrassment and hesitation the last Sabbath ; and having put me to silence then, they expected to do so again ; so, throwing themselves back in their seats, as by some previous understanding among themselves, one of them said, " We don't want to learn any more ; we have read the lesson, and that is enough." But I was not thus to be repulsed. They had easily embarrassed me the Sabbath before, but I had now the love of God in my heart, and was not so easily to be diverted from my purpose. My love for their souls was so great that, in my zeal, the tears flowed freely from my eyes, and without fear I entered cheerfully upon the duty before me. It is easy to eat when hungry or to drink when thirsty, and I have always found it an easy thing to speak of Christ when my heart was full of his love. Determining, therefore, not to be foiled, I laid my hand upon the collar of the boy before me, and drawing him towards me, (for they were all proudly braced backward, looking me in the face,) I said to them, " Now, boys, I want you to remember that you are children, and too young to know what is for your best interest. You have been sent here to learn, and I am placed over you to teach you ; and because I love you much, I intend to do it. If you will sit up and give attention to what I say, as well-bred boys should do, it will give me great pleasure, and we shall get along pleasantly ; but if you are wilful and obstinate, or grow restless and uneasy, I

shall hold you fast ; for God requires me to do this duty, and if I fail, he will be displeased. Whether you are willing or unwilling, I shall try to do my duty." This mode of proceeding seemed to make some impression upon the boys, for the one upon whom I had laid my hand, who seemed to be a kind of leader among them, answered, that he would sit up and listen to what I might say ; and the rest following his example, they all gave up their opposition, sat up respectfully, and, in the end, turned out very good boys. I was that day received as a teacher, and assigned to this class, which I kept and taught regularly, until our school was scattered by the cholera, which passed through the city the next year, and converted our school-room into a hospital.

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CHAPTER VII.

CONTINUANCE OF THE WORK OF GRACE IN THE FAMILY—
UNEXPECTED REVELATIONS—ALLEN-STREET—A PRE-
CIOUS BLESSING—THE ALARM OF MY MOTHER—"GOD
WORKS IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY"—A BROTHER'S CON-
VERSION.

I NOW return to the affairs of our own family, and relate how the influence of God's spirit began to operate among my relatives. On Thursday, following my Sunday School experience related in the last chapter, at the close of my day's work I returned home, and, as usual, repaired to my room to pass a season in prayer and self-examination. I had a few precious moments with the Lord, and then went down to tea. While sitting at the table, the brother to whom I have already referred, as even more wicked and reckless than I had been in my worst days, inquired if I was going out that evening. I replied that I was going to class, and invited him to accompany me. "Well," said he, "I don't know but I will. What do you do there?" I explained, as well as I was able, the nature and object of the class-meeting; telling him we were invited in turn to tell the leader the state of our minds, as nearly as possible, and that he afterwards gave us and advice as he thought suitable, and generally wilful sored to help us on in our Christian course.

I told him the leader acted in some sense like a medical man, who first learns the symptoms of each particular case, and then gives a prescription, with suitable directions ; that when he had heard the particulars of each case, he gave suitable admonition, encouragement or exhortation. After which, we prayed for each other, and the leader, generally, for all, and thus closed our meeting. My brother gave strict attention to what I said ; but, after a moment's hesitation, he observed, that he thought he would not go with me that evening. His manner, so unusual in him, with the evident interest he showed, awakened hope for him in my own mind, and caused considerable solicitude in the family. After tea, which passed in unusual silence, I said to him, " Well, if you decline going with me to class meeting, go with me, at least, a part of the way for company, as I dislike walking alone." To this proposition he consented, and we started out together. As soon as we were fairly in the street, I said to him, " now, my brother, tell me honestly what you think of these things which have lately come to pass?" With much earnestness of manner he answered me nearly in these words : " John, you know me, and you are aware that I am of that class that cares but little for any thing or any body. And especially on the subject of religion I have always been reckless and indifferent ; nay more, I have been an unbeliever and an infidel. My skepticism was never greatly shaken until last Saturday, when you and Abraham lay together on the floor. The effect produced upon you convinced me there must

be a reality in religion, and especially that its power came from God. I was deeply impressed, too, with the thought that I was myself entirely destitute of it, and that the God who cannot look upon sin with allowance, was so thoroughly acquainted with the iniquity of my heart that it was entirely useless for me to think of obtaining it. The thought that I must entirely abandon the hope of obtaining what I saw gave you and Abraham so much delight, filled me with despondency ; still, though I had little hope of any advantage from it, I resolved to speak to you on the subject."

The words of my brother so overwhelmed me with mingled emotions of surprise and gladness that I was fairly stunned, and for a moment was unable to reply. Then I said to him, addressing him by name, "had you told me that you were righteous, and needed no repentance, there would be less hope in your case, for Jesus says he came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance ; but as God has given you grace to see that you are a great sinner, he has proved to me that Jesus is a great Saviour, and as he died for you, he is able and willing to forgive and accept you as his child. There is, moreover, proof of the truth of what I say, in the fact that he has inspired you with a desire for salvation, and given you courage to make inquiry on the subject. It is God's holy spirit working in your heart that has led to this result, and I am satisfied that this is to you a day of gracious visitation."

He answered, that, after much hesitation, he had resolved to speak to me on the subject, and had de-

terminated, if I thought there was hope in his case, to get my advice as to what he ought to do, and to follow it strictly. After expressing my gratification at what he had said, I again reminded him that God had said, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy." I then urged him solemnly to ask help in prayer, and employ faithfully the means of grace which I should point out to him. "I have invited you," said I, "to go to class meeting with me, not knowing the state of your mind, and though I think it would be a good place for you, yet I think I know one still better. You know I have just found the Lord myself, and the way by which I was led to him is yet very fresh in my mind, and I shall recommend the same path for you. There are doubtless many ways by which men find the Saviour, but it is natural that I should recommend the one that successfully carried me to him, and in which I found his pardoning love.

"In our church to-night the classes meet, and there are no other meetings, but at Allen-street there will be preaching, followed by a prayer meeting, and penitents will be invited to the altar for prayers. You had better go there, and when the prayer meeting commences, and the invitation is given, do you go to the altar, kneel with the rest, and ask God to bless you, and you will no doubt be benefited; and when our class is dismissed, I will come up and see how you get along." To this proposal he evidently felt some objection, the adversary suggesting, and is apt to do with one newly awakened, that ~~the~~ ^{an} altar, I to the altar could do no good. "I don't ~~me~~ ^{think} that

he, "how that can benefit me. You know that it would be no cross for me, as I have no fears about it, but would just as soon do that as remain in my seat."

"You may think so now," said I, "but you don't know how you will feel when the moment arrives. I think you will find it a cross; at least I did, and I think you will. At all events you will be doing your duty, and putting yourself in the way of receiving the Lord's blessing; and as I think this the best way, I hope you will take my advice." "Well," said he, "I will go, but don't forget to come up after class." So we parted, and I went to the class-meeting with a heart glowing with gratitude and hope. We had an excellent season in class, and after the meeting closed, I went to the Allen-street church, somewhat doubting whether my brother had observed the advice I had given him. As I entered the church and passed down the aisle, I looked anxiously around the altar, where several penitents were kneeling, but I could not see my brother among them. I then looked carefully around for him among the audience, and at last saw him sitting in one of the pews, with his head down upon the back of the seat before him. I went to him, and entering the same pew, sat down by his side and inquired why he had not gone forward for prayers. He hesitated for a moment, and then frankly said he could not. Indeed, I saw that he trembled exceedingly, and I then knew that the word of the Almighty had pierced this stout-resolved sinner, who trembled, perhaps, the first

time in his life. "Now," said I, "I am convinced what your duty is; you must go to the altar." He was silent. "Come," I continued, "if you wish, I will go with you; let us go and seek the Lord's blessing."

"No," said he, "the meeting will soon close; it is too late to-night." "Never mind that," I replied, "there is time enough for you to take up your cross." But I urged him in vain; I could not prevail upon him to take the decisive step, which, under the circumstances, I was satisfied was required of him. I would not be understood to say that the act of approaching the altar for prayers possesses any virtue in itself; but God requires the submission of the heart; and unless there exists in the heart a spirit of entire submission and a willingness to confess him before men, he cannot bless the sinner. And as going to the altar almost universally tests the submission of the penitent, so any hesitation, and especially unwillingness, to take this step, is usually a bar to all progress.

After the meeting was dismissed we retired, and on our way home I presented these views to my brother; and he promised me, that if he lived and should be able to reach the church the next night, he would take this step and go to the altar. Meanwhile I earnestly prayed that he might have grace to keep his promise and confess Christ before men. The next evening, at the close of my day's work, I returned home, passed a short time in prayer, and then joined the family at tea. During the meal, I asked my brother if he was going with me that

evening to church, and he replied that he was. As there was some time between the hour for tea and the time for church, I thought I would spend the interval in prayer; and, returning to my room, I knelt beside the bed, and spread out my wants before God. My greatest desire then was, that the Lord would go with us to church, and be present in power in the meeting, and especially that he would pardon my seeking, sorrowing brother. And I earnestly sought the testimony of the Spirit that my prayer was heard. When, after a protracted struggle, my words were spent, and I was only breathing after an answer, suddenly, it seemed to me, the heavens opened above me, and I saw the air filled with angels. With a mighty effort I leaped upward to join the glorious throng, and, coming to myself, I was standing by the window, still in my bedroom, and still in the flesh, but gazing upward with rapture in my heart, and with accents of rejoicing upon my tongue. But, fearful that it might not produce a good effect in the house, I struggled hard and restrained my shouts. I walked, however, up and down my room, glorifying God and praising him with an overflowing heart, but with a voice subdued, that it might not attract the attention of the household.

While I was in this ecstatic state of mind, my brother, Abraham, who occupied the room in common with me, came in to prepare for church; and seeing that I was unusually excited, he inquired, "John, what is the matter?" My pent-up feelings could no longer be restrained, and my reply was,

“Glory to God in the highest!” in a voice like a trumpet, which rung through the chamber, and awakened the echoes of the whole house. With that cry upon my lips I passed down stairs into the back room, where I encountered my mother standing in the midst of the family. They had heard my cry of victory, and astonishment was upon every countenance as I opened the door. My dear mother raised her hands in astonishment, when she saw me, crying out, “What is the matter with you, John?” My answer was the same as that I gave my brother Abraham in the room above—“Glory to God!” and repeating these words, I passed through the midst of them into the front room, my mother repeating her questions, apparently in great distress, “What in the world is the matter with him? is he getting crazy?” But, ah! my dear reader, let me tell you, if you are a stranger to the work of God in the heart, the secret was, that God was answering prayer; and although the effect may seem like foolishness to some, yet, to those who have tasted of the grace of life, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The manner in which God works is sometimes truly confounding to human reasoning; but at this time I was permitted to run through the family like Samson’s foxes through the standing corn of the Philistines with the fire from off the altar; and though it may have seemed to some like strange fire, yet it proved to be fire from Heaven, possessing power both to consume sin and refine and purify the heart. When the hour for service arrived, we

repaired to the church. My brother, for whom I had been praying, went forward to the altar when the invitation was given, and knelt in submission and prayer before God. It is worthy of remark that this stout-hearted sinner, who had declared so confidently that going to the altar would be no cross to him, found himself nearly physically disqualified from discharging this duty. He made several efforts before he could rise from his seat; and he told me afterwards, that when he had risen, the distance to the altar seemed to him to be a mile, and that with a feeling of desperation he rushed forward with a quick run and threw himself down before the Lord. But though he ran, he did not, that evening, find peace. The Lord did not, however, delay his coming, and he was soon after made the happy subject of the saving grace of God. Then we sung over our victory the good old song, "This, our brother, was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found." His conversion was the cause of infinite rejoicing to me, and greatly encouraged me to hope and pray for those of our household who were yet strangers to God, and without hope in the world.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL WORK OF GRACE AT HOME—DISCUSSION OF DOCTRINES—THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT—GLIMMERINGS OF HIGHER ATTAINMENTS—NEEDS INSTRUCTION—REMARKABLE ANSWER TO PRAYER.

Soon after the conversion of my brother, spoken of in the last chapter, the excitement in our family became general. A younger brother, of whom I have already spoken as my reprover even in our childhood, and who was, indeed, always piously inclined, and who had for some time been engaged as a teacher in the Sunday School attached to the Presbyterian church in Rutgers-street, left there and went to the Allen-street church, where he soon became happy in a knowledge of sins forgiven, and cast in his lot with the Methodist people. It is not necessary that I should record minutely the progress of God's work among us. Suffice it to state, that it was announced in the Allen-street church, about the time of which I am writing, that within five weeks God had so graciously blessed a single family in the neighborhood, that five of its adult members had been converted, and joined the church. The family alluded to was ours—so wonderfully had God wrought among us. But the end was not yet; only five had united with the church; and our family, at that time, consisted of nine adult

members. There was yet, therefore, work to do; and those who had found the Lord were earnest in prayer and effort to bring in the others.

The first one who was moved was the brother, whom I have already mentioned, who refused to cross the street at my sister's invitation, when Abraham lay on the floor, slain of the Lord. He soon afterwards went and entered in (if I may thus speak) at the straight gate of the Presbyterian church—of which he remains a hopeful member until now. Another, also, the eldest of the family, at whom I was so much affrighted the evening of my conversion, returned home soon after that occurrence, and a revival then being in progress in the neighborhood among the Presbyterians, he became interested, and soon after hopefully converted to God. My dear mother, also, cast in her lot with this people; so that eight out of the nine, which composed our family circle, had now become professedly pious, and united with the people of God—five being members of the Methodist Episcopal, and three members of the Presbyterian church. This division of our household was the occasion of not a little discussion of the doctrinal points and usages which distinguish the two denominations. Free grace, the decrees, the witness of the Spirit, &c., were topics of earnest discussion among us for many years. Perhaps some may be inclined to think we attached too much importance to the dogmas of our belief; but for myself I have always highly esteemed the peculiar doctrines of the church of my choice. The right of private judgment, as

distinguished from priestly authority and domination, seems to me to be involved in the question; and if Protestantism insists upon the right of reading the Scriptures and determining the mind of God for one's self, she admits the responsibility of doing this according to the best light the reader can command, and in the exercise of his best judgment. If this be admitted, then, both the right and the duty of examining and comparing the doctrines of the churches is not only conceded but enjoined. The apostle commends the noble Bereans, because they searched the Scriptures daily, to determine whether his preaching was in harmony with God's word; and we are required to be always ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us with meekness and fear. Besides, a right practice is more intimately connected with a right belief than many are apt to imagine. For these reasons I have never been disposed to condemn discussion among brethren of different churches or views, or the friendly comparison of different views with the word of God. Of course, these remarks are not intended to give countenance to contention and strife. If religious discussions cannot be conducted in a friendly spirit, they had better be avoided entirely; for no advantage they might promise could compensate for the loss of charity.

Having secured, through the atoning merits of Christ, my own personal salvation, and seen my whole family, with one exception, brought into the ark of safety, I had many precious seasons in meditating upon the goodness of the Lord, and in pon-

dering upon his precious promises. I reflected that religion was a life, and that as I had fairly entered upon that life, it must be, that as I advanced in years I might advance in enjoyment and Christian attainments. I had heard much from the pulpit of a high state of Christian attainments, and the same state of grace had frequently been alluded to in our class meeting, and in the prayers of the brethren and sisters, and I found it shadowed forth in glowing terms in many passages of Scripture, but as yet I had a very obscure and imperfect understanding of the distinctive doctrine of Christian perfection. I felt an anxious desire to lead a holy life, and felt convinced that I might obtain more of the mind that was in Christ. With this persuasion, I often prayed for a deeper work of grace in my own heart, without exactly understanding what I wanted, or how my object was to be obtained.

In this state of mind, I can now see how near I came, on more than one occasion, to that for which my soul thirsted, but for want of instruction I groped in obscurity, and failed to secure the blessing.

One night, when I had retired earlier than usual, I lay musing upon the exceeding goodness of God, both to myself and the family, and as I thought of the sweetness of redeeming love, it occurred to me that the more of God's grace I possessed the happier I should be, and the more useful I might become. And lifting my heart to the Lord, I prayed that I might be filled with the fulness of his love. The scene which followed is very vividly impressed upon

my memory. I prayed with great earnestness, for a present blessing, and my faith claimed the promise. Suddenly, not gradually, but like a shock of electricity the blessing came with power, like the rushing of a mighty wind. It seemed to lift me from my bed, and like Paul, I could not tell whether I was in the body or not. I remember the thought passed through my mind, that my body would be found in my bed, but the spirit would be gone. But my desire was so great to see the end of sin, that I still continued my cry for a clean heart, and in answer to my prayer, the tide continued to rise and swell in my soul, until fear crept upon me, and almost involuntarily I whispered, "Lord, stay thy hand," when the influence subsided, and gradually passed away; yet I rejoiced that I had received Scriptural measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HAPPINESS OF FIRST LOVE—CONVERSATION WITH AN INFIDEL—FAITH IS TRIED—FAILS FOR A SEASON—GREAT DESPONDENCY AND DISTRESS—A PARTIAL VICTORY—THE CLASS MEETING—COMPLETE TRIUMPH—ADVICE TO THOSE UNDER PECULIAR TEMPTATIONS.

THUS far in my Christian course my way had been sufficiently smooth. The opposition that I had anticipated was graciously turned aside, and those from whom I had expected it to come had turned to the Lord, and were striving to live by faith. But the time arrived when my faith was to be tried, and the temptation came from quite an unexpected quarter. At the period of which I now speak, I had been a member, or rather probationer, in the church about two months, and was employed at my trade at Wallabout, on Long Island, about a mile from the ferry. This distance I walked, back and forth, morning and evening. We commenced work at seven o'clock in the morning, which, at that season of the year, was about two hours after sunrise. I was accustomed to rise early, pass over the ferry, and thence by the path on the shore of the bay and along the river side to the orchard, in which we were building, where I usually arrived soon after the sun rose. Living amid the pent-up streets and confined atmosphere of the city, the morning hours in this quiet orchard were delight-

ful and luxurious to me. The diamond dew-drops sparkling upon the grass, the trees clothed in rich verdure and gay with blossoms, the quiet breath of early morning, with the glad notes of the wild birds, all conspired to fill my heart with grateful emotions, and lift my thoughts to the bountiful Creator of nature and the giver of all grace. It was my habit to carry with me my Bible and hymn book, and in this quiet grove to spend the time between my arrival and the hour for work in reading the Scripture, meditation, singing and prayer. I found this an excellent preparation for the duties of the day, and after the morning's communion with God, refreshed and strengthened in body and mind, I went with cheerfulness to labor.

But while I was thus happily and profitably spending the morning hours, I had been observed by one who planned my overthrow. He was a cold-hearted infidel, and irritated at witnessing my evident enjoyment, he meditated, with hellish malice, some device to destroy my peace. With this object in view, he approached me while at work, and entered into conversation.

"You seem to be very happy, young man," said he.

"Yes," I replied, "I am; I live a very happy life."

At my reply I observed an expression upon his countenance, which disturbed me and put me partially on my guard against him.

"Most persons," he continued, "desire happiness; pray where do you obtain it?"

"The Lord bestows it upon me, sir," was my reply.

He asked me many other questions, which I answered as well as I could, but I was unwilling to continue the conversation, for I had a presentiment that I stood in the presence of temptation; so I told him frankly, that I was very young in the cause of religion, and not well qualified to dispute with him, but that I hoped he would not attempt, by his superior knowledge, to unsettle my faith. "Sir," said I, "all my happiness consists in loving and serving God, and in the belief that God loves me, and has pardoned my sins and shed abroad his love in my heart, and I hope you will not talk to me at all, with the purpose of disturbing my peace of mind." He however persisted in his purpose, and inquired:

"Do you believe there is such a place as hell?"

"Certainly I do," was my answer.

"Do you know where it is?" he continued, "or what kind of place it is?"

I told him I did not.

"Well," said he, "if you wished to find out, where would you go to learn?"

"I suppose I should go to the Bible," I replied.

"Of course," said he, "your teachers would send you there to learn. Now, if you don't know, I will tell you, what the Bible says about it. In one place it says, 'that hell is a lake of fire and brimstone,' in another, 'that it is a place of outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"
"Now," he added, "you know that these two descriptions are contradictory, for if it is a lake of fire,

it cannot be a place of outer darkness, for where fire is there must be light. In another place the grave is called hell. David says, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,' and this is represented as a prediction respecting Christ, that his soul should not be left in the grave. Besides, other notions of future torment are frequently held out in the Bible, but it is all a fabrication of designing men, to alarm people and compel them to obey their directions." After a few other remarks in disparagement of the Bible, he went away, and left me to think on what he had said.

Instead of resolving to inquire of some one of my Christian friends, and request him to reconcile these seeming difficulties, or asking God to give me light, I pondered during the day upon what the man had said. In this case, Satan took advantage of the peculiar character of my intellect, which is always inclined to give every plausible objection to religion a fair examination, and refute it by honest reasoning. But in this case I suffered much; not that I cared so much with respect to the situation or nature of hell, or whether there was such a place of torment or not; for I loved the Lord, and could serve him through love, without fear of hell. But then the Bible was attacked; I thought that he reported its words truly, and as I had been taught to regard that book as the word of an unerring God, to be shown that it contained self-contradictions, greatly harassed me, and filled my mind with gloom and darkness. This affair occurred on a Tuesday morning, and the day was a sorrowful one

indeed. I had not passed so unhappy a day since my conversion. At night I returned home with a heavy heart, resolving, however, to speak to none of the family on the subject. I tried to pray, but with little satisfaction or benefit; my faith was gone, and the words of prayer were vain. The next morning I went again to my favorite resort in the orchard; but alas, every thing was changed. In vain for me nature wore its most smiling aspect, in vain the birds warbled their sweetest songs; my heart was sad, and gave forth no responsive echo. My harp hung upon the willows, and I could only weep over the remembrance of departed joys.

The day passed slowly away, but no relief came to my burdened heart. On Thursday I again began with prayer, but I had now become really miserable. Since my conversation with the infidel I had scarcely slept an hour at a time. Anxiety had affected not only my spirits but my bodily health; and I had become extremely nervous. It seemed to me that I could adopt the language of Mary at the sepulchre—"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

Restless and unhappy, I tried to bear my burden alone. I was unwilling to speak of my difficulties at home, lest the report should disturb the peace of others as well as of myself; and I was ashamed to apply to others for relief. I thought it was very clear that the Bible contradicted itself on the points to which my attention had been called; and thus my confidence was shaken in that book which had been a source of so much comfort to me. I seemed

like one who had been walking gladly and confidently by the light of the sun—but whose sun had gone down suddenly at noon-day—leaving him to grope in darkness in a strange path without a guide. I felt convinced that I should never again be so happy as I had been when I reposed unshaken confidence in God's word. Under these circumstances I found some relief in recurring to my conversion. *That*, I was sure, was the work of God; and nothing could disturb my confidence on that point. Finally, I reached the conclusion that I would not be arrested in my religious course, for I had still, in the work God had wrought in my own heart, conclusive evidence of the reality of religion, whether the Bible contradicted itself or not. This was, in some sense, a victory over Satan; he had disturbed my peace, but he had not overthrown me, nor had he turned me aside from the way.

The next difficulty that met me was, what I should do about my class. As long as I did not come in contact with the members of my class, or subject myself to the searching inquiries of the leader, I might manage to conceal my difficulties; but any intercourse with them was almost certain to lead to an exposure of my state of mind. At first, I thought of abandoning the class, for, I thought, if I went there and confessed what had occurred, I should be censured, but I was very reluctant to do this; for I highly prized this means of grace, and felt convinced that without it I should go back to the world, and probably lose my soul. I seemed hedged in on every side; and in whatever direction I looked, the

path was dark, gloomy and discouraging. I tried to pray, but with little satisfaction; for I seemed to have no faith and no access to God. Yet, subsequent experience assured me that I was not forsaken in that dark and trying hour, but that God heard me, as out of the depths I cried unto him; and in answer to my agonizing plea, inspired the resolution I formed, to go to my class and tell the leader all my difficulties, and ask an interest in the prayers of the members. "I will go," said I, inspired with a sudden resolution, "and tell them all about it, and ask them to pray for me; and I will serve the Lord all my days, because it is my duty—whether I recover my joy or not. If men have tampered with the Bible, and I can not rely upon that, I will seek the guidance of his Spirit, and follow the best light I can obtain; but I will serve the Lord while I live." The struggle which I have attempted to describe continued up to the hour for class; and I had no sooner reached a decision, than, with this strong resolution in my soul, I set out for the meeting. As I passed along the street, I lifted my heart to God in prayer; but all was dark until I drew near the church, when the darkness began to give way, and I felt the Lord coming into my soul, as aforetime. I walked slowly, keeping my eyes closed, only opening them occasionally to see that I did not run against any one; and before I reached the church, I was full to the brim! It was with difficulty that I kept from shouting aloud along the street. When I entered the class-room, and knelt as usual at my seat, in a moment the power of God

came down upon me like a flood, and I could restrain myself no longer, but shouted my dear old song again—"Glory to God!" I had been tempted to believe the Bible false; but now my doubts had disappeared, and I fully believed in its truth, though no one had explained the apparent difficulty. Thus was verified the truth of that Scripture—"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."—John vii. 17.

Very soon after the meeting commenced, the leader came to me, saying, "Well, brother John, you seem to be very happy to-night, let us hear what the Lord is doing for you." I rose, and "made a clean breast of it," telling him the trouble I had been in, with the cause of it—that it had brought great darkness into my soul, in which I had groped for three days; but that the Lord had graciously appeared to me on my way to class, and restored to me the joys of his salvation, and that now my soul was happy in him. I cannot repeat all he said in reply; but I remember a part of his advice, which I will record for the benefit of any of my readers who may chance to come in contact with those who profess to doubt of the existence of future punishment.

Said he, "When infidels strive to unsettle your faith by expressing doubts of a future state of retribution, you may tell them that your course is certainly a safer one than theirs. That, believing as they do, they will, of course, make no preparation for a day of judgment; while you, with your belief, will live godly in Christ Jesus, and so number

your days as to apply your heart unto wisdom. That, while life lasts, they will gain nothing by their unbelief, while you will enjoy much happiness in the service of God. That, when death comes, as it must come to all, you will be supported and comforted by your belief, while they will be without hope, and, at the best, must take 'a leap in the dark.' And that after death, if it shall appear that they were right, you will have lost nothing; but if you were right, they have lost all. You are for ever happy, and they for ever miserable. So that in whatever aspect the case may be viewed, the Christian's course is the wiser and safer." This is a very summary answer to all infidels who profess to disbelieve in a future judgment, or a state of future rewards and punishments.

Before I dismiss this subject, however, it may not be amiss to make some remarks upon this miserable subterfuge of the adversary by which I was so nearly overthrown, lest some of God's dear children should, in their inexperience, be embarrassed by it as I was.

The attempt of the infidel who assailed me was really as weak as it was wicked. Here is his snare by which he entrapped me: "In one place, the Bible describes hell as a place of outer darkness, and in another as a lake of fire. Both cannot be right; for if it is a lake of fire it cannot be a place of outer darkness, for where there is fire there must be light. Therefore, the Bible contradicts itself." Now, if this very wise man had been honest, and known what he was talking about, he would

have said, that, in Matt. viii. 12, where alone the words “outer darkness” are found in the Bible, the Saviour is not describing hell at all, but simply declares that the wicked shall be excluded from Heaven. He was comparing the kingdom of Heaven to a nuptial feast, and sinners to guests who arrived too late to be admitted. The nuptial feasts of the Jews were celebrated at night, and the nuptial chamber was brilliant with lights; so that those who were admitted, enjoyed the light; while those who were excluded were in darkness, or outer darkness—the darkness on the outside of the house. And all that Christ meant to teach in this figurative language is, that those admitted to Heaven shall enjoy its light and glory, while sinners shall be shut out. Let us be wise, and prepare to enter in with Christ. In hell their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. May the grace of God save the reader from this damnation!

CHAPTER X.

UNFORTUNATE RESULT OF AN EFFORT TO DO GOOD—A WALK IN THE SUBURBS—CONVERSATION WITH BAD BOYS—STONED BY THEM—A POLICEMAN INTERPOSES—CHARACTER OF MY YOUNGER BROTHER—OUR VISIT TO THE COUNTRY—ANTICIPATIONS AND REALITIES—A REMARKABLE DREAM.

My anxious desire to do good sometimes led me into disagreeable if not dangerous positions. The reader will permit me to give him an account of one of my adventures of this description. I was, at the time, a teacher in the Sunday School, which I have already mentioned. The public services in the church, with my duties in the school on the Sabbath, made the day to me one of spiritual labor, as well as of spiritual profit. One Sabbath, after the labors of the morning and the afternoon were passed, and the evening was approaching, I walked out a short distance from our residence into an open meadow, in the suburbs of the city, thinking to spend there in quietness the closing hours of the day in meditating upon the pulpit instruction we had received, and in preparation for the evening service. At this time the authorities of the city were carrying a street across the meadow, grading it about fifteen feet above the natural level. I walked out on this newly-made street as far as it was graded, and then took

a seat for meditation. The scene before me was such as may generally be witnessed in the suburbs of a large and rapidly-growing city. The meadow itself had been broken up in various places by partially-finished streets extending across it, obstructing the natural course of the water, and backing it upon the upland. There was a garden standing amid the general confusion, which bore marks of taste and care; but the water had been crowded up among its fruit trees and shrubbery, until, choked and suffocated, they were perishing under the march of progress. But I need not describe the appearances which surrounded me, further than to say, that the votaries of pleasure and sin were thronging out into the country, or drifting back towards their homes, after a ramble abroad—all careless and thoughtless—while the laugh of gaiety or the oaths of the profane indicated the character of the moving multitude. Nature was calm and peaceful; the noble city, just at hand, lifted its stately spires towards heaven, indicating much of intelligence and external glory, and some anticipations of its future extent and prosperity flitted across my mind; but I was depressed by thoughts of the deep depravity of its citizens, and of the sinks of iniquity which abounded in its streets, and was forcibly reminded of that striking scene, when the Son of God looked down upon the City of David, and wept over its coming doom. My meditations were disturbed by the noise of some boys, who had approached, unperceived by me, sheltered by the opposite bank of the street.

They seemed not to regard me, but continued their boisterous play by running up and tumbling down the bank. But what shocked me particularly was their language, which was full of profane and bitter oaths and curses. My thoughts were soon diverted from every other object to these neglected and wicked boys. I listened a moment, completely stunned, and could scarcely believe the evidence of my senses, so awfully profane were their words. I turned round, and looked directly at them, thinking that when they saw they were observed, it would restrain them. But they seemed not to notice me, and continued their rudeness, and their obscene and profane words. After a short time I rose up and crossed the street, so that when they came to the top of the bank they were close beside me. But it did not arrest them for a moment. Finally, when they came up, I spoke to them. "Children," said I, "you seem to be very fond of play. I used to love play, too, when I was a boy like you; but now that I have grown up to be a man, though I do not play any longer, I yet love to see children play and enjoy themselves. I am, besides, very fond of little boys. Now some little boys like to have grown people, who love them, talk to them. I hope you are of this number, and that you will sit down here with me, and answer a few questions; after which, I will tell you some things which I think you will be glad to hear." Thus speaking, I sat down; but they hesitated. "Come, children," I continued, in an encouraging tone, "sit down; don't be afraid of me; I would not

hurt you sooner than I would hurt myself." They then sat down, and I endeavored to interest them in conversation. Lifting up my heart for help, I said, "Children, can you tell me what day this is?" "Sunday, to be sure," responded one of them, in a flippant, careless tone. "That is right; I am glad you know; and if you will sit still a little while, I'll tell you why it is called Sunday. But first, I want to ask you if you go to Sunday School?" Some of them answered no; others said they used to go. "Well," said I, "would not some of you like to go? I know a very good school, and I will get as many of you admission as will give me your names and residences." I had no sooner made this proposal, than, with one impulse, they all rose up, and one of them, with a shout, tumbled heels over head, down the sloping bank, into the meadow. I begged the rest to remain; but, at the call of their comrade, they imitated his action, and tumbled down the bank with a loud hurrah. They then all assailed me with invectives, oaths and opprobrious language, and, as I rose, and slowly started towards the city, with sorrow in my heart and a prayer upon my lips in their behalf, they suddenly attacked me with a shower of stones. One struck the skirt of my coat, and several came very near my face; but none hit me. It was a retired place, some distance from the city, and as I saw how they followed me up rapidly, discharging their missiles, I began to apprehend the possibility of serious injury, when a man suddenly came up from the meadow, upon the road, from the side op-

posite to that occupied by the boys. "Sir," said I, addressing him, "do you know any of these boys?" Looking towards them, as I spoke, I was surprised to see them scattering in all directions, and running off with all speed. "No," said the man, "I don't know them, but they know me. I saw the stones coming over the bank, and I thought I would come and see what it meant. And I am very glad I did; for they might, otherwise, have done you serious injury. I am a peace-officer, and am stationed in this neighborhood to look after the boys that misbehave, and most of them know me, and take good care to keep out of my way." Thanking the man for his attention, I continued my way home, grateful that I had been accounted worthy to suffer reproach and be stoned, for striving to do good in the name of my Master. I remembered that saying, "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." In the evening I went to the sanctuary, grateful for the protecting care of a kind Providence, and there enjoyed a rich repast supplied by the Great Master.

From the time our family left the country, some of us had been accustomed, in the month of July in each year, when cherries are ripe, to visit our relatives on Long Island. My younger brother and myself had intended to make this annual visit the year of which I am now speaking. Of this brother I have already frequently spoken. He was distinguished, from early youth, for his conscientiousness, and the general amiability of his disposition. He was a universal favorite in the family, and was

generally beloved before his conversion ; but when grace had been added to that which was so lovely by nature, his character and disposition became really angelic. I had looked forward with great delight to a visit to our country relatives in his company ; but as the season for the visit approached, we both began to feel some apprehensions of the consequences that might arise to ourselves, as well as respecting the influence we might exert on others. In fact, we feared both the influence others might exert on us, and that which we might exert on them. We expected to be subjected to questionings, and to hear objections to our faith, and knew not how we might answer the one or bear the other.

I pretend not to judge others, nor by what I may say do I presume to decide their religious attainments ; I simply state the thoughts that occupied our minds and had an influence upon our actions at the time. We greatly feared that many of our country friends, though of unimpeachable character and having the form of godliness, were strangers to the practical piety which we professed ; and our principal anxiety arose from the fear that when brought into contact with them, we should lose our own spirituality, or fail to set before them such examples as would constrain them properly to esteem the high importance of the religion of the heart. We made the matter a subject of earnest prayer ; but when the appointed time came, neither of us felt much anxiety to go, fearing that in some way the visit would tend to injure the cause we so much

loved. Having made all our arrangements, however, and being expected by our friends, we started and reached the house of an aunt on Saturday, near evening. Our reception was kind and cordial, and every thing passed off pleasantly during the evening. Nothing whatever was said about our new faith, and I do not remember that the subject of religion was spoken of at all, and we repaired to our sleeping apartment very happy, and grateful to God that he had as yet spared us the trial we expected. When we reached our room, and had prayed earnestly that we might be kept under the special care of the Almighty, and enabled to return home in safety, we conversed a long time upon our situation, and the prospects before us. We were both young in years, with a brief experience of divine things, and we knew how much our relatives were prejudiced against Methodists. Nothing had as yet been said on the subject, but we were convinced that our trials were only delayed, and that probably the next day our friends would be down upon us. After a long and anxious conversation, we went to bed, and finally fell asleep.

During my sleep I dreamed a dream, by which we were both greatly comforted and strengthened. I dreamed that my three brothers (those who, with me, belonged to the Methodist church) and myself were walking along a road, not far from where I then was, that ran along the side of a mill-pond. It seemed to me that the brother who was then in bed with me, and myself, were greatly perplexed about something, I could not tell what, but sud-

denly looking up, I saw my other two brothers run towards the water, and leaping in, swim off towards the middle of the pond. In surprise, I said to my brother, "see yonder, they have left us, and are swimming off into the pond." Before he had time to reply, I cast my eye up the road, and saw a large, fierce-looking lion rapidly approaching us. "Ah!" said I, "there is the cause of their leaving us." In much alarm, my brother exclaimed, "what shall we do?" I replied, "it is too late for us to escape; the lion is too near, we must pray!" Thereupon I closed my eyes and prayed earnestly to God. It seemed to me that I was taken off my feet and lifted up in the air; but I continued praying until I thought the lion must have passed by us. Then opening my eyes and looking down, I saw him just passing us, and felt him rub against my feet. I closed my eyes again, and continued to pray, and after a little while opening them again, I saw him some distance off, just passing from the road into a cornfield. I thought we both then ran out upon the mill-dam, and hailing our brothers, who were still in the water, they swam out in safety, and we all rejoiced together at the thought of our escape from so great a peril. In the midst of our rejoicing I awoke, in a very happy state of mind. I meditated upon the vision, and feeling too happy to sleep any more then, I awoke my brother and told him my dream. He interpreted it as I did, and we were two very happy persons. "Now," said I, "after this I shall have no more fear about our visit, and shall speak of my religion just as freely as if I was

at home, for I am sure the Lord has shown me, that though the lions may rub against us, yet we shall be permitted to rejoice with the others unhurt." In fact we went on our way speaking freely of our religion at pleasure, yet we met very little opposition; thus mercifully the Lord encouraged us by the way, and brought us off in safety.

This is one among a thousand instances to show that "they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever."

CHAPTER XI.

CAMP MEETING—THE BONDAGE OF FEAR—HOW WE ESCAPED OUT OF THE NET—A PRAYER MEETING—THE CURIOUS LOOKER-ON AT CAMP MEETINGS NOT LIKELY TO BE BENEFITED—THE NECESSITY OF ENTERING INTO THE SPIRIT OF THE MEETING AND WORKING FOR THE LORD—THE UNREADY—AN ADMONITION.

A MONTH or two after my return from the visit spoken of in the last chapter, my brother Abraham and myself attended a camp meeting at Croton. I think it was the last one held at that place. We reached the camp ground about noon, and were greatly interested in the exercises. It was the first meeting of this description that either of us had attended since our conversion to God, and we had looked forward to great advantages to result from participating in this means of grace. But in this expectation we were disappointed on the first day. Being strangers, and young men, we felt some delicacy in taking part in the exercises; but we realized that, under such circumstances, the rule of the apostle was applied to us—"If any would not work, neither should he eat;" and we walked about, with sad countenances, as spectators of the joys of others. We understood the condition upon which the Master offered us the children's bread; but the cross seemed so heavy that we wanted

courage to raise it; and the adversary succeeded in keeping us in bondage. We went to bed that night with heavy hearts—although we confessed our cowardice and besought forgiveness in prayer. We rose early in the morning, awakened by the sighing of the wind among the trees of the encampment, and walked out. The day was just dawning. As we passed through the encampment our ears were saluted by voices singing the "*Old Ship Zion*." As we drew near, we found the music proceeded from three or four sisters who were gathered near the door of one of the tents. The words of that well-known hymn stirred my heart; and as the thrilling notes of the music trembled upon the breath of morning, and floated off on the still air, I felt that had I done my duty the day before, and borne the cross faithfully, I could then have shouted the high praises of God; but the remembrance of my fear and cowardice oppressed me, and I was under a cloud of self-condemnation. "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth."

Under a sense of equal self-condemnation my brother proposed that we should go into some retired part of the adjacent woods and pray until God should give us grace to bear the cross. Consenting to the proposal, we started at once; and on our way met a young brother of our acquaintance, who, upon inquiry, we found was in the same condition with ourselves—without courage to bear the cross, and under condemnation for neglect of duty. Upon telling him where we were going, he expressed a wish to accompany us; and remembering the

precious promise made to the two or three, we consented, and went on our way together. Having found a suitable place, my brother proposed that I should open the meeting, and I gave out the hymn—

“Try us, O God, and search the ground
Of every sinful heart.”

When we had sung the hymn, I called upon the young friend who had accompanied us to pray ; after which we sung again a few more verses of another hymn. We did not, perhaps, observe strict scientific rules in our melody, but we sung with the spirit, and with hearts panting after God. My brother then engaged in prayer, and he pleaded with God as a man would plead for his life. He gradually rose, like a man going up a ladder, until he reached the top, and seemed to enter the upper story of all-blessedness. The very heavens were opened ; and in answer to his cry, the Holy Ghost descended in rich abundance upon our souls. Without waiting for me to pray in my turn, he leaped upon his feet, and skipping about among the trees like a young fawn, shouting the angels' song—“Glory to God in the highest,” he broke up our meeting. But what we sought we had obtained ; the love of God was flowing most gloriously in all our hearts—though Abraham, who appeared to have been seated directly under Mercy's fall, had received the greatest draught. When our surprise and joy had somewhat subsided, or rather when we had become somewhat accustomed to the new atmosphere we were breathing, we each took hold of Abraham, one by

each arm, and started back for the encampment—he, meanwhile, making the woods ring with his loud hallelujahs, and we joining the chorus without much discord. I suppose, were my dear brother present, he would gladly write a few lines for me, describing the scene of that morning; and I am sure he would bring it more vividly before the reader than I can do; for I think I have heard him say that the leaves of the trees appeared to him to be pure gold. But as we drew near, the people came out to meet us, and such as were not acquainted with “this way,” inquired what was the matter with him, while the people of God rejoiced with us with exceeding joy. After this, the camp meeting was to us a most delightful place, and we entered into the spirit of the meeting, participated in its blessings, and went home greatly benefited.

My experience at this meeting, confirmed by subsequent observation, teaches me that the Christian is not greatly benefited by attending camp meeting, if he goes there merely as a spectator. “The diligent hand maketh rich,” and a visitor at a camp meeting is not likely to have his spiritual strength renewed, unless he enters into the spirit of the meeting and works for God. At such places God is present in a special manner, as he was in the camp meetings of ancient Israel, when they pleased him. But at these meetings there is work for every one. They furnish a field and offer employment to every child of God. All stand upon the same level; the rich may pray, the poor may pray, the called may preach, the learned may teach, and, in truth, none

who are willing and obedient need stand idle or go away unemployed, for as it was at the building of the latter temple, all may find something to do; for if they cannot sing with the young men, they can weep with the old, and although they may be engaged even at the eleventh hour, each one shall receive his penny.

I saw at this camp meeting one of my acquaintances, who always spoke well of religion, but was never ready to embrace it; he acknowledged that it was unsafe to live without it amid the uncertainties of life, and yet could not determine to secure it to-day; he admitted he would be unwilling to leave the world without its benefits, and yet he had not found a convenient season to ask God to bestow them upon him. I saw him many times afterwards, but he was never ready. I saw him on his dying bed; he had still the same appropriate and consistent views of religion; he deemed it all important, but he had not yet sought it, and he died as the fool dieth, without God and without a rational hope of Heaven.

How many, like him, are now in the eternal world lifting up their eyes in torment. They felt all the importance of becoming reconciled to God, and really intended not to die unforgiven, but they said to the Spirit of God, and, perhaps, to affectionate friends, who urged them to seek the Lord, "go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." But alas! that convenient season never came, and from the midst of light and knowledge they went down to the regions

of the lost. And how many are walking now in his footsteps? They hear the solemn words of Holy Writ repeated in their ears, "Behold, now is the accepted time! behold, now is the day of salvation;" they admit their want of preparation for death, the uncertainty of life, and the reality of a day of future retribution, and yet they defer all preparation, and live on, with the almost inevitable certainty of dying without hope. Reader, may God open your eyes to the wisdom of seeking the Lord while he may be found, and calling upon him while he is near!

"No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone;
If now the Judge is at the door,
And all mankind must stand before
The inexorable throne.

"No matter which my thoughts employ,
A moment's misery or joy;
But Oh! when both shall end,
Where shall I find my destined place?
Shall I my everlasting days
With fiends or angels spend?

"Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape the death
That never, never dies!
How make mine own election sure;
And when I fail on earth, secure
A mansion in the skies."

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL PEACE—SORROW—DEATH OF MY BROTHER—
REFLECTIONS AT HIS FUNERAL.

“If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.” So speaketh the wise man, and the experience of the world has confirmed the wisdom of his words. Since the day of my conversion I had led upon the whole a very happy life. Though darkness had been occasionally round about my path, yet in the sympathy of Christian relatives and friends, I had found consolation, and so great had been the grace of God in Christ, that my sorrows had hitherto, like the morning cloud and the early dew, been soon dispelled by the brightness of the appearing of the Sun of Righteousness.

But one of the greatest afflictions of my life was now approaching. My youngest brother, of whom I have spoken so often, was now engaged in business in company with an elder brother. Not only because he was the youngest, but because of his amiable and affectionate disposition, this younger brother was the universal favorite of the family. From a child, like Timothy, he loved and studied the Bible, and with a better education and more information than the others, he was able to instruct those older than himself. His superiority in these

respects was acknowledged in the family, as well as his amiability and strict integrity; and in addition to this, he was an unwavering example of Christian piety. For these reasons he was always selected as arbiter in the family controversies that arose, and his decisions were never appealed from. He was in truth almost idolized by us all, and his loved name has been perpetuated in his brothers' families, having been conferred on children, with many prayers that they might emulate him whose loved name they bear, in piety and amiability.

My brothers boarded at home, but slept in an apartment connected with their store. On the evening of the 6th of February, 1832, at tea, my youngest brother was requested to ask a blessing, but he excused himself, and asked another brother to perform that duty; but while he was asking the Giver of all Good to sanctify to us the blessings of his providence and grace, my youngest brother was suddenly overcome by some unusual influence, and left the table in tears. He was a person of few words, not of an excitable disposition, and such an exhibition of feeling was very unusual with him. He returned to the store, and, as usual, remained there all night. In the morning he returned to breakfast, and while standing by the stove he told his mother that he had not been well during the night, and was still quite indisposed. This communication awakened some apprehension in my mother's mind, for she immediately recurred to the death of my father, observing, it is just four years to-day since your father died. He made no answer,

but sat down with a very serious air. After a while, feeling more unwell, he laid down and fell asleep. No particular anxiety was felt for him, as it was thought his illness was very slight, and that a little rest would restore him ; but when he awoke he was in a high fever, and his bright intellect was clouded by delirium. The physician was at once called, and every effort was made to arrest his disease, but in vain ; for, on the 14th of the month, just seven days after he spoke to my mother at the stove, his freed spirit went home to God. A short time before he died his reason was restored, and he then spoke of the sustaining grace of God, and assured us that he was happy, and that all was well. Thus fell my dearly-beloved brother, in the seventeenth year of his age. Though young, he was like a shock of corn fully ripe, and he went up to join the blood-washed throng, and to take the harp and the crown, while his home was left desolate, and, like Rachel, we refused to be comforted because he was not.

The next day his body was carried to the house of my eldest brother in the country, and thence to its burial ; and a throng of relatives and friends made great lamentation over him. I remember, as we entered my brother's house, that I recalled one of the remarks made by the deceased a short time before his death. He said, "I have been wanting for some time to visit my brother in the country, and had I continued well I should have done so ; but it will not make much difference, we will now all go up there together." As these words came

back to my memory, I could no longer restrain myself, but wept with a loud and bitter cry. Though I was assured that my brother was then sweeping his golden harp and shouting among the angels, yet I think I have never before or since wept with such an utter abandonment of grief. In the language of David, weeping over Saul and Jonathan, I could say, "I am distressed for thee, my brother; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful—passing the love of women."

The Presbyterian minister of the town had been invited to officiate at the funeral. He was a man much beloved by his people, and, I believe, truly devoted to God. He dwelt, in his discourse, much upon the final resurrection, and, quoting the words of St. Paul, "As one star differeth from another star in glory," &c., argued a difference in glory among those finally saved.

I remember his remarks disturbed me not a little, for I inferred from what he said that a difference in grace here would separate the righteous there—a doctrine which I did not approve.

CHAPTER XIII.

REACH MY MAJORITY AND COMMENCE LIFE FOR MYSELF—
VIEWS OF A COMPETENCY—THE CHOLERA—REMOVE
INTO THE COUNTRY—THINK OF LIVING TO BENEFIT
OTHERS—EMPLOYMENT IN THE COUNTRY—A LESSON
ON CHARITY—RETURN TO THE CITY—RESUME SUNDAY
SCHOOL LABORS—WORLDLY PROSPERITY—MADE SUPER-
INTENDENT OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THE summer following the death of my brother is known as the cholera summer in New-York. In May of this year I was twenty-one years of age, and having at present no prospect of assistance from home, I commenced life for myself, my sole capital being a good trade, good health and a good employer, with the prospect of plenty of work. Having always after my father's death given my wages to my mother, I had had but little use for money, and had scarcely thought of the amount I had earned.

Commencing now for myself, I began to think of the object I had in view, and to calculate how much money I should want to make myself independent. It may cause a smile at my expense, when I state that as I looked forward and thought of the days to come, with old age, sickness and decrepitude, I concluded that a capital of fifty dollars would be a sufficient provision for my wants, and I set about

amassing that sum, confident that when it should be attained, I should be perfectly satisfied. With my plans thus arranged I went to work, and as my wages were good and my expenses small, I was soon in a fair way of securing the object I had set before me.

When, however, my accumulating capital had reached thirty-six dollars, the cholera had become so fatal in the city, that my mother and the rest of the family insisted upon our removing into the country ; and a house having been obtained near Jamaica, on Long Island, we left the city and took up our residence there, where we remained about three months.

During our stay in the country I only worked about four days at my trade, and the consequence was, that my surplus capital was expended, and I was in debt when the health of the city was so much restored as to make it prudent for the family to return. Starting afresh, however, in the fall, I soon extricated myself from debt, and in addition realized the fifty dollars surplus.

Feeling now that I had obtained about all I should need of worldly goods, I was beginning to reflect upon the best course to pursue, when meeting a friend, he informed me that he was greatly in need of money, and asked me to loan him sixty dollars on his note, payable on demand, with interest. Without hesitation I made him up the desired sum, and reflecting upon the circumstance, I concluded that here was an open field before me. And I made up my mind that I should not live uselessly

if I put myself in circumstances to assist in a small way such honest men as were struggling to establish themselves in business. The plan seemed to me to be in harmony with the spirit of the Bible, and I was trying, in the best way I was able, to live for eternity. This object, then, became for a time the stimulant with me to industry and economy, and I had the happiness to make myself of some service to my fellow-men.

The time spent in the country during the summer was not lost. Having no employment at my trade, I devoted myself industriously to the improvement of my mind, by the diligent perusal of such books as I could obtain. The number was small, for the neighborhood in which we were staying was not much given to reading ; but I had my Bible, hymn book, a dictionary, and a few others, with a weekly religious paper, and with them I occupied myself, and not unprofitably.

Prayer meetings were held in the neighborhood frequently, and being invited to take an active part in them, I availed myself of the privilege, and acquired some facility in speaking and praying in public, while my spiritual strength was greatly renewed. The principal source of my strength and advancement, however, came from my diligence in meditation and private prayer. To avail myself of these, I spent much time in my closet and in the groves, engaged in prayerful self-examination and communion with God. I think still, with lively gratitude, of those precious hours, when I had such delightful access to God at the throne of grace,

and made such rapid advancement in the knowledge and love of God.

In my early Christian course I was very rigid in adhering to outward forms, and was, perhaps, unduly prepossessed in favor of those of my own church. I had attached unusual importance to the custom of kneeling in prayer, and felt assured that I could not successfully approach God in any another attitude. Very great fervor was usually given me in my communion with my Maker; and not unfrequently in prayer I lost sight entirely of outward things. I felt assured, therefore, that should I attempt to pray standing, I should fall down.

One beautiful Sabbath morning, a brother and myself visited a Sunday School in the neighborhood. The school was under the direction of the Presbyterian church; and as we entered the room where it was held, they were engaged in prayer—the person leading standing upright in his place. The house was soon completely filled; and in the part where I sat especially, the people were packed snugly, with no spare space anywhere. I soon understood that it was a Sunday School prayer meeting; and shortly after we entered, I was called upon to unite in prayer. I rose up with the design of kneeling where I sat, but finding it almost impossible to do so, on account of the crowd, and being always disposed to avoid singularity where no principle was involved, I remained on my feet and commenced praying—thinking no more about kneeling until my prayer was ended, when opening my

eyes, I was somewhat surprised to find myself still upon my feet.

I learned from my experience, on this occasion, that "God looketh on the heart," and that though it is decent and respectful to observe a suitable attitude in prayer, yet he hears the sincere heart, regardless of outward circumstances. My brother, however, was greatly tried by my unintentional compliance with the custom of the "standing order" in this respect; and after we left the meeting he accused me of violating one of the usages of Methodism, and threatened to prefer a charge against me to that effect before the society of which we were members. This was, however, but a momentary impulse on his part, and the recollection of the affair seemed soon to pass from his mind—though the occurrence was remembered by me; and I learned from it a lesson of charity.

When we returned to the city, after our summer's sojourn in the country, I found the room we had occupied for a Sabbath School not yet vacated—having been used, as I before had occasion to remark, during the continuance of the pestilence, as a hospital for cholera patients.

As soon as it was vacated, our Sunday School labors were resumed, and my heart became greatly interested in instructing the young in the ways of religion.

At this time the duties of the Sunday School, with other religious engagements, and my regular secular employment, kept me in a state of constant activity, both by day and night; and in my various

duties I had the constant assurance of God's presence and approbation.

I shall now pass from the fall of 1832 to the spring of 1834—during which period God had greatly blessed me. I found in my own experience that “godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.” I had grown in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, and I also had increased in property.

By steady industry and economy, with the blessing of the Lord, I found myself, in the spring of 1834, in possession of \$400. At this time my brother Abraham proposed to me to unite with him in the purchase of some building lots, which were soon to be sold at public auction. He wished me to make the selection of the lots—proposing himself to attend the sale and purchase them for our joint benefit. I acceded to his proposition, and four lots were purchased for about \$700. In the following spring we agreed to improve the lots, and bring them into the market for sale. My brother, who was in the lumber business, proposed to furnish the materials and any lack of capital that might be wanted; and I was to take charge of the work and make the improvements. At this time, the fever of speculation raged in the city, and our lots had advanced more than one hundred per cent. on the price for which we had purchased. I went forward with the buildings—at the same time carrying on a building for a man to whom we had sold one of our lots—and by the following fall had completed the

improvements, and offered the property for sale. Purchasers were soon found at a good price, and the next spring, when we closed up this affair, I found myself possessed of \$1,890 in cash.

Shortly before this time I had been elected superintendent of the Sunday School with which I had been connected ; and this position furnished me a far more extended field of usefulness. The number of scholars attending the different schools connected with our church was so great that it was found impossible that they should all attend services together without giving up the greater part of the church for their accommodation ; and for this reason the schools attended church in rotation. On the alternate days, when our school did not go to the church, we had service in our school-room. In these services the superintendent was expected to take a principal share, so that I had an opportunity to become accustomed to speaking in public as well as to improve somewhat in that exercise. To these openings of Providence I am greatly indebted for preparation for greater and more extensive usefulness.

CHAPTER XIV.

ENGAGE IN THE LUMBER BUSINESS—PROSPER—THOUGHTS OF MATRIMONY, WITH INITIATORY STEPS IN THAT DIRECTION—COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE—INTERVIEW WITH A STRANGE LADY—ITS ABRUPT TERMINATION—DETERMINE TO SEE THE LADY AT HER HOME—VISIT TO TROY, ALBANY, LANSINGBURGH, NEWBURGH AND FISHKILL—FIND THE LADY—RECEPTION—REPEATED VISITS—“POPPING THE QUESTION”—MARRIAGE—MADE CLASS LEADER.

IN the spring of 1836, the firm for which my brother had acted as foreman being about to close affairs, he wished me to unite with him in the lumber business. As the proposals he made me were generous, and the business promised to be profitable, I accepted his offer, and the firm of A. & J. H. Mills, Lumber Dealers, commenced business with the hope of retaining the customers of the retiring firm.

I had by this time made a large circle of acquaintances, both within and without the church, and while zealous in business, I was, by the blessing of God, enabled to continue fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

I had now reached my twenty-fifth year, and as I thought my circumstances and prospects would justify it, I began to ponder upon the subject of settling

myself in life, by looking for a partner in a domestic establishment. This matter was the theme of many anxious thoughts, and of much prayer to God for wisdom and direction. I had hitherto sought companionship with those much my seniors in age, and had avoided the company, and in a great measure, the society of the young and gay of both sexes. I especially deemed it wrong and dishonorable to court the society of those of the other sex, and thus possibly awaken expectations of serious attentions, when there was no such design on my part. In my imagination I had sketched my beau ideal of a wife, and I determined not to seek a companion until I found one that answered my ideal model. Two things against which I was immovably set were pride and laziness. Give me a woman who unites, with a meek and quiet spirit, habits of activity and industry, though without a cent, rather than pride and laziness with thousands. Such a woman "looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness; her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband, also, and he praiseth her."

During this year, I had been intimate with a gentleman and his wife, who, in conversation with me on one occasion, described a lady of their acquaintance in such glowing terms as to awaken a desire on my part to be acquainted with her. Their description answered well my own idea of what a wife should be; and upon expressing my desire, the lady promised me an introduction at an early day.

Not long afterwards, the lady in question and her father were expected to spend a night at the

house of my friends, and, faithful to their promise, I was invited to meet them there. The poet says, "Coming events cast their shadows before," and the thoughts of the possible result awakened considerable excitement in my mind. The anxious evening at last arrived, and with considerable trepidation I made my way to my friends' house. The father, previous to my arrival, had received a hint that roused all his vigilance, for he was not at all disposed to lose his daughter—though she had reached her twenty-sixth year. On my introduction, he soon became much disconcerted, and suddenly excusing himself from staying all night, took his daughter and left. I had been very favorably impressed by the appearance of the lady; but as they lived at Fishkill—some seventy miles distant—further than I had ever been from home—I at first gave up all expectation of seeing her again. This was in the early part of summer; and here the matter rested until fall—except as it was occasionally revived by those who had introduced us. When my fall business was over, my thoughts wandered more frequently towards the Highlands; and I began to think my heart was more interested than I had imagined in the lady whom I had seen but a moment, and who had then been hurried so precipitately from my sight. Influenced by some mysterious attraction, and stimulated somewhat by the bantering of my friends, I determined to take the bold step of seeing the lady at her home.

Having made my arrangements, I went up the Hudson, visited Albany, Troy and Lansingburgh,

and returning down the river landed at Newburgh, opposite Fishkill. The lady lived about eight miles from Fishkill landing; so having crossed the river, I hired a horse and sleigh and started for her residence. The route led along a range of mountains, such as I had never seen, and becoming bewildered, I was obliged to obtain a pilot to the town of Fishkill. From this place I proceeded two miles further to the residence of the lady's father. Upon arriving there, I felt slightly embarrassed as to further proceedings, but seeing some men near the barn, I drove past the house, and stopping near them, inquired if that was the residence of Mr. E. Pepper. Being answered in the affirmative, I informed them that I had been introduced to him in New-York the preceding spring, that my name was Mills, and that as I was travelling north, finding my way led past his residence, I had called to see him. The men proved to be Mr. Pepper's sons; they bade me welcome, invited me into the house, and took charge of my horse. I made my way to the door alone, and upon knocking, it was opened by the young lady I sought, who, with a slight appearance of confusion, introduced me to the members of the family who were present. The father happened to be absent, having not yet returned from the landing, where he had gone to ship some produce to New-York.

I remained here over night, and the next day being Sunday, had the pleasure of driving the young lady to church in my sleigh. After service she kindly consented to make a call upon a mar-

ried sister, who resided at some distance beyond the church, where we remained until towards evening, when we returned to her father's house, and passed the evening in pleasant and agreeable conversation. In the morning I returned to New-York. My excursion had been a very satisfactory one. I was much pleased with the spirit, manners and conversation of the young lady, and had obtained permission to repeat my visit at an early day. I could no longer doubt "that my heart was in the Highlands," and regularly once in four weeks I took a pilgrimage to the north. These regularly recurring journeys of seventy miles each way, by stage coach, over an awfully rough road, for one entirely unaccustomed to travel, with the thermometer for most of the time well down towards zero, made the days of my courtship laborious if not painful, and convinced me, that in my case at least, "the course of true love did not run smooth." My journeys back and forth were too disagreeable to be romantic, and I soon made up my mind to ascertain early the probable result.

So summoning my courage, I determined, in the month of February, to make proposals in due form for the hand of the lady. I had no occasion to be dissatisfied with the manner in which my offer was received by her, and it was agreed between us, that I should ask the consent of the parents at my next visit. When the time arrived an opportunity was arranged, and I asked the consent of the father and mother. After I had managed to make my request known, a rather awkward silence occurred, but the

mother relieved it by observing, in a very kind tone, that she saw no objection. On this hint the father spoke, and his sentiments were expressed in a single word. Opening his mouth, he uttered a very empathatic "No!" and was then silent.

Finding the oracle not disposed to proceed further, I sat down, and prepared honestly and fairly to reason the case with the obstinate old gentleman. I told him plainly that I had long since made up my mind, as an honest and conscientious man, never to marry a lady who had parents without their consent, if any reasonable objections were interposed. But that before I would relinquish my hope of obtaining his daughter's hand, I expected he would give me some reasonable objections to our union. After some little hesitation, he answered curtly, that he could not spare her. I replied, that his objection did not seem to me to be a reasonable one; that his daughter was now in her twenty-seventh year; that I had reason to believe she had served him faithfully, and that I thought she was now of an age to justify her in entering into the marriage relation. He tacitly assented to the reasonableness of what I said, but added, that we were too hasty, and that they were not yet sufficiently acquainted with me to justify their giving consent to my wedding their daughter. I could not but admit the propriety of his being fully satisfied with respect to my character and prospects, before giving his consent, and assured him I could make no objections to any inquiries he might feel disposed to make. I even proposed to furnish him

references to whom he might apply for information. In order to make the whole case plain, I explained my circumstances, and told him I was worth about three thousand dollars, that I was indebted to my brother for a part of the capital with which I carried on my business, though the business itself furnished support, and promised to be profitable. I took, however, a practical view of the matter, and told him I did not come seventy miles across the mountains in the winter for the romance of the thing—that it was both expensive and fatiguing, and if I was on a fool's errand I wanted to know it at the earliest moment. That keeping company with his daughter without the expectation of marriage would be of no service to either of us, and that though I did not wish to hurry matters, yet I thought the question should be decided at the earliest moment it could be done with propriety.

It was finally agreed that the decisive answer should be given at my next visit. This took place about six weeks after, when, on recurring to the subject, all objections were withdrawn, and the time fixed for the ceremony to take place. We were married on the 25th of April, 1838. Having made this important engagement a matter of much thought and prayer, and been influenced in my selection by none of the foolish romance of youth, I can truly say, the blessing of the Lord has attended my married life. I have found the partner thus selected a help-meet for me; and as my wife, before marriage, was a member of the same church with myself, we have been true yoke-fellows in all things.

Soon after my marriage I was appointed the leader of a class, a position involving great responsibilities, and the duties of which added greatly to my labors. I found my class considerably run down. Many of the members were negligent in their attendance, and the tone of piety among them consequently low. Much of my time was occupied in visiting and conversing with the delinquents, and in justice to all parties, I must say, that I found carelessness and inattention to class duties not entirely the fault of the members themselves. As a general thing, absence from class commences in some real or fancied neglect on the part of the leader. Sickness, or some other justifiable cause, has probably kept the member at home for a few weeks, and the leader has made no inquiry on the subject, or has not visited him. Or perhaps the leader has not been sufficiently sociable, and has permitted the member to feel himself overlooked or neglected, or some expression misunderstood or misapplied has wounded his feelings, and been left to irritate and fester until he has been soured and alienated. A single kind word spoken at first would have removed all difficulty, but now for weeks or months Satan has been busy with temptations, until the difficulty is magnified, and in the end a soul may be lost. I found from experience the imperative necessity of visiting members at their homes, in order to secure the prosperity of the class, and, indeed, in order to their personal profiting by my labors.

The cares and anxieties connected with my secu-

lar business had also been greatly increased. The speculative fever had been followed by its natural consequence—great financial embarrassment. Though our firm was not dishonored, yet we suffered considerably, and much time was consumed in vain efforts to make collections from our debtors.

Increasing engagements of a business character, with the labor of fitting up a home for myself, so occupied my time and exhausted my strength, that I was induced to resign the office of superintendent of the Sunday School.

CHAPTER XV.

DEATH OF MY FATHER-IN-LAW—INCREASE OF PROPERTY FROM HIS ESTATE—TOBACCO AGAIN—HEALTH DECLINES—REMOVE INTO THE COUNTRY—CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE—INTERVIEW WITH THE “DOMINE”—ARRANGEMENT WITH THE DEACON FOR PRAYER MEETINGS—A CLASS FORMED—LEADER—FARMING NOT VERY PROFITABLE—CALL TO PREACH—TRIAL SERMON—LOCAL PREACHER—SPECIAL PROVIDENCE—VICTORY OVER TOBACCO.

DURING the summer of this year my father-in-law died very suddenly, and the division of his estate the next year nearly doubled the amount of my earthly possessions. For the next two years I was greatly engrossed with increasing cares, and my close and unremitting application to business began seriously to affect my health. In earlier life I had become addicted to the immoderate use of tobacco, and the ill effects of this habit were now seen in attacks of jaundice and dyspepsia, which were fast undermining my constitution. By the advice of physicians, and in accordance with my own wishes, I withdrew from my business in the city, and purchasing a small farm in New-Jersey, between Elizabethtown and Rahway, I removed there with my family in the spring of 1841. In this neighborhood I providentially fell in with an old acquaintance and

class-mate, with whom I enjoyed many seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. My family at this time consisted of my wife and one child ; one other we had given back to God, who gave it. Under these circumstances I went into a strange neighborhood, feeble in bodily health, but strong in faith, and determined, by God's grace, to serve him to the best of my ability. I soon made acquaintance with the people of the neighborhood, whom I found exceedingly sociable, but greatly addicted to the habit of evil speaking, which to me was a very great grievance. They did not seem to be actuated by a wicked spirit, but the tendency was evil, only evil, and that continually.

Soon after my removal to the place, I was invited to attend the funeral of an elderly lady, as one of the bearers. The funeral services were performed by a Presbyterian clergyman of the town, of considerable distinction. The day was very stormy, and as the procession left the house for the graveyard, the clergyman announced that he had room in his gig for any one who wished to ride. By the request of a neighbor, it was so arranged that I might ride with the clergyman, for the purpose of forming his acquaintance.

As soon as the funeral procession got under way, my companion turned to me and opened a conversation, by inquiring whether I lived in the neighborhood. I told him that I had very lately become a resident there, having purchased the farm known as the Clark farm, and removed there with my family from the city of New-York. He then in-

quired whether I belonged to any religious denomination, and upon learning that I was a member of the Methodist Episcopal church, volunteered to inform me that I had now settled in a part of the country where Methodism was little known, and that the population had been under Presbyterian influence for more than fifty years. Thinking the remark designed to apprise me that there was no need of any other religious influences in the neighborhood, and as fair warning to make no attempt to introduce Methodism there, I took occasion to say that I did not know who was responsible for the religious character of the people, or under what denomination their morals had been formed. That I had come into the neighborhood an entire stranger, and had found the people very friendly and obliging, but that I had observed in one respect they must have been badly taught, or had profited little by their teaching. Expressing considerable curiosity to know to what I referred, I informed him that the people seemed to me very grossly addicted to evil speaking. That in almost every family I had visited, I had heard the characters of nearly the entire neighborhood discussed, and not always in the spirit which I thought Christian charity would suggest. And I added, that the principal object I had in view in accepting a seat in his carriage, was to speak on this particular subject, and inquire whether he could adopt any course to check this unchristian practice. He seemed a little taken aback by my communication, and after a few moments silence,

replied, "well, I have never heard any thing of this before."

A few days afterwards I was visited by one of the deacons of the church, who requested me to unite with him in sustaining a prayer meeting in a neighboring school-house. I mentioned my conversation with the minister, and told him I was a Methodist, and that if I consented to his request, I should claim some privileges in the meetings, though I might never use them.

The deacon was a man of catholic spirit, and made no objections, so we united in holding a weekly prayer meeting in the school-house. This meeting was kept up as long as I remained in the place, and was made interesting and profitable to many. We had also a prosperous Sunday School, and soon a class was organized, of which I was appointed leader, receiving authority and advice from the Methodist Episcopal church at Rahway, of which both myself and wife were members.

In temporal things, farming did not prove very profitable to me. While residing here, in 1844, my youngest daughter was born. This child, with the one mentioned before, forms the family for whose religious instruction Providence has made me answerable, and I have faithfully endeavored to nurture them in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Perhaps my labors in the prayer meeting above referred to, may have first awakened in my mind the inquiry whether God did not demand of me a more unreserved consecration of whatever talents I possessed to his cause. I had, indeed, for

some time been deeply impressed with the conviction that God was calling me into his vineyard as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel, and under the advice of experienced friends, I applied for and obtained a license as a local preacher. I preached my first sermon on a Sunday afternoon, in the church and before the congregation with which I was connected in Rahway, N. J., from Amos, iv. 12, "Prepare to meet thy God." The subject was introduced by some remarks upon the authority of the text, as "thus saith the Lord," with its special design as addressed to Israel. It was then briefly shown that it had an application to the present congregation, and in this aspect of the subject I noticed :

I. That man in a state of nature or sin is unprepared to meet God.

1. This is seen in the analogies of nature, and in the fitness of things. In the erection of a building the various timbers or blocks of stone are not fitly prepared by nature, but need to be adjusted by labor and art to prepare them to answer their appropriate designs.

2. This idea finds illustration in animated nature. The various tribes of earth, air and water are prepared for the positions they occupy, by peculiar structure and instincts, and are quite unfitted for any other sphere than that in which they are placed.

3. This is clearly seen in the various associations and professions of men. Careful preparation alone qualifies men to act well their various

parts in the world. A man is fitted for a trade or business only by careful preparation. A man is fitted for a profession only by patient study and cultivation. So it is evident that for another state of being or to meet God, peculiar preparation is required. I noticed:

II. *That man must meet God.*

1. Man meets God in his providences.
2. In his mercies and judgments.
3. At death.
4. In the final judgment.

I noticed:

III. *The importance and necessity of an immediate preparation.* And

IV. *How to prepare.*

Showing, under this head, that repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, with a life of sincere obedience, is the only way to prepare to meet God.

At the close of the service I received a formal license from the proper authority of the church, dated August 28, 1844. This license has been regularly renewed every year, according to the usage of the church.

After receiving this regular authority to preach the Word, I sought opportunity to labor for my Master, and was accustomed to preach at various

school-houses ; at three regularly, on Sunday or week day evenings while I lived on my farm ; and I can say, with heartfelt gratitude, that I enjoyed very many seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. I have reason, too, to think that these meetings were profitable to those who attended them, and that I did not labor altogether in vain.

I experienced, too, some remarkable deliverances from danger, one of which I shall be pardoned for mentioning, as an evidence of God's care for those who labor to serve him in their day and generation.

On one Sabbath I had been engaged to preach at Newark in the morning and afternoon, in the Halsey-street and Franklin-street churches.

Newark was about eight miles from my residence, and on the appointed Sabbath I harnessed my horse, took my family with me in my wagon, and started for church. About two miles from the city, in descending a long and steep hill, my horse became unmanageable, and ran with frightful speed, kicking in the front of the carriage as he ran, and placing us all in imminent peril of serious injury or death. My wife and children were greatly alarmed, and their loud screams increased the fright of my horse. As we dashed down the hill, my trust in God kept my mind calm, though I was conscious of the fearful peril of our situation, and observing a single place where the carriage could pass from the road to the fence without being overturned, I exerted my strength, reined up the horse, and plunged into the fence by the road side. Providentially no serious harm was done, and having led the horse for some

distance and calmed his fears, we proceeded on our way, and reached my appointments in safety.

After service in the afternoon, having had my horse cared for at a livery stable, he was harnessed by the hostler at the door of his establishment, and, getting into the carriage with my wife and children, we started for home. After travelling some distance, the horse again became restless, and threatened to run; and finding myself unable to control him, I jumped out and took him by the head, when I discovered that the bit had been placed under his jaw, instead of in his mouth; and thus we escaped another peril. Having properly adjusted the harness, we pursued our journey in safety.

About this time I entered into a covenant with my brother to abandon the habit of chewing tobacco—a practice to which I had been addicted from boyhood—and although he failed to abide by his pledge, yet I have not, as yet, taken my first chew since that time, and the probability now is that I never shall, having faithfully abstained for the last twelve years.

CHAPTER XVI.

RECOMMENDED TO TRAVEL—WITHDRAW THE RECOMMENDATION IN ORDER TO ARRANGE TEMPORAL AFFAIRS—EMPLOYED BY THE PRESIDING ELDER—SENT TO FLATBUSH—NO CONVENIENT PARSONAGE—SICKNESS—PARTIAL RECOVERY—DOUBTS ABOUT THE DUTY OF TRAVELLING—ENTER INTO BUSINESS—SEVERE AND PROTRACTED SICKNESS—FEELINGS IN VIEW OF DEATH—CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY—STIRRING HYMN—CLOSE UP BUSINESS AND REMOVE TO NEWARK—LABORS THERE—DEATH OF MY ELDER BROTHER—RETURN TO BROOKLYN—CARLTON AVENUE—EMPLOYMENT—NEWBURGH—LAW.

IN the spring of the year 1845 I was recommended, by the quarterly meeting Conference of the Rahway Station, to the New-York Annual Conference, as a suitable person to be admitted into the travelling ministry. I was received by the Conference, but afterwards withdrew the application, in consequence of my fears that I should be embarrassed in my ministry by secular affairs. I thought, upon reflection, that it would be advisable first to place my property in a more favorable situation, and one less likely to require my attention. Accordingly I offered my farm for sale, and succeeded in disposing of it the following fall, and converting it into dwelling-houses in the city of Newark. Having arranged this matter satisfactorily, I reported myself for work to the Presiding

Elder of the Long Island District, and was appointed by him to supply a vacancy at Flatbush. I took charge of the church, and preached for them several weeks; but finding it impossible to obtain a suitable residence in Flatbush, I finally rented a house in East Brooklyn, some two miles or more from my church, into which I moved with my family. I informed the official brethren at Flatbush of what I had done, stating, if it was satisfactory, I would serve them, from that distance, until the ensuing Conference; but, if not, I would supply their pulpit until they could be otherwise provided for. At first they were not pleased, and, desiring a preacher who would reside with them, they requested the Elder to supply them; but, changing their minds, they afterwards requested that I should continue; but I was prevented from doing so by protracted sickness.

When I had partially recovered my health, I found myself entirely without employment, and was at liberty to preach every where as doors were opened before me. I generally had one or two appointments for each Sabbath in some of our churches, and found frequent opportunities of preaching Christ elsewhere, especially in the Marine Hospital. By this means my mind was kept active, and my desire to give myself to the work of the ministry continued. But as my health did not improve, I began to think the Lord was about to excuse me from travelling in the ministry. After much and prayerful examination of my own heart, and a careful consideration of the circumstances in which

I was placed, I concluded to engage, temporarily at least, in secular business, and accordingly, in August, 1846, I hired a store and commenced the grocery business, at the corner of Park and Franklin Avenues, in East Brooklyn. The business prospered, and in the early part of the winter I entered into an arrangement with the owner of the ground to build a dwelling house adjoining the store, taking a lease of store and dwelling for several years. The building went forward, and on the 1st of May, 1847, I moved into the new dwelling. From the dampness of the walls, or from some other cause, I was soon severely attacked with bilious fever and inflammatory rheumatism, which carried me as near death's door as the living ever go and return. During a part of this illness I had no expectation of recovery, having lost entirely the use of both my lower limbs and my left arm. In this condition I remained, with only my right arm, my head and heart alive, while the rest of my body was utterly helpless. My anguish was intense and indescribable. For at least one memorable day and night I expected every hour would be my last, but under these solemn circumstances the joy of my heart and the hope of my soul are beyond my power to describe. My joy was ecstatic, and my hope was as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil. During the greatest severity of my sickness, the family of John T. Hildreth (a name which will always seem dear to me) visited me almost daily, singing for me the sweet songs of Zion, and sympathising with me in my deep afflictions. Their

singing was most heavenly to my soul. His lady, like an affectionate mother, would bring roses and lay them by my head, and he himself, with a small daughter, used to sing one hymn in particular that left an abiding impression on my memory. I do not know but it was of his own composing, but it has more than once, through the medium of their sweet voices and the lovely tune they sung, made my heart bound within me for joy. I feel it a duty to record here the verses of that lovely poem as he gave it to me.

CHRISTIAN ARISE.

1. Christian, the morn breaks sweetly o'er thee,
And all the midnight shadows flee,
Tinged are the distant skies with glory;
A beacon light hangs out to thee.

CHORUS.—Arise! arise! the light breaks o'er thee,
Thy name is graven on the throne,
Thy home is in that world of glory,
Where thy Redeemer reigns alone.

2. Thy God is ever kind and gracious,
He will direct thy course above,
For thou art in his sight most precious,
The object of his special love.

CHORUS.—Arise! arise! &c.

3. Toss'd on time's rude, relentless surges,
Calmly composed and dauntless stand;
For lo! beyond those scenes emerges
The height that bounds the promised land.

CHORUS.—Arise! arise! &c.

4. Christian, behold ! the land is nearing,
 There the wild sea storm's rage is o'er,
 Hark ! how the heavenly hosts are cheering,
 See in what throngs they reach the shore.

CHORUS.—Arise ! arise ! &c.

5. Cheer up ! Cheer up ! the light breaks o'er thee,
 Bright as the summer's noontide ray,
 The star-gemmed crowns and realms of glory,
 Invite thy happy soul away.

CHORUS.—Away ! away ! leave all for glory,
 Thy name is graven on the throne,
 Thy home is in that world of glory,
 Where thy Redeemer reigns alone.

Another brother, whose name I have forgotten, but it is remembered in Heaven, furnished me, from some society with which he was connected, with persons to watch beside my sick bed at night. I did not recover my health again until fall, and even then only partially. I doubted for a long time whether I should ever be able to do business again, and finding that my stock of groceries had either been sold out or nearly all been used in the family during my sickness, and that I was realizing little or nothing through my agent for my property at Newark, I determined to close my business at Brooklyn and move to Newark, that I might personally superintend my interests there. Accordingly I sold out in the best way I could, and removing to Newark, took up my residence in one of my own houses, which was partially unoccupied, after having lived in Brooklyn about two years, during

the most of which time I was a member of the Franklin Avenue church, and in addition to my labors as a local preacher, had been steward and class leader.

As I had now settled at Newark, I joined the Halsey-street church. Here, as my strength was gradually restored, I found an open field for labor, into which I cheerfully entered. I found a place for work in prayer meetings, preaching as opportunity offered, and especially in the prison on Sabbath afternoons. In this place, more than in any other, my time was occupied in visiting the poor, the wretched and the sick. This class seemed to be particularly thrown in my way by Providence; and my own sickness and suffering had prepared me to sympathise with them in their sorrows. It was my lot to visit, for counsel and relief, some of the most distressing cases I had ever imagined. In the poor-house there was a female who had suffered in the most extraordinary manner. She had been for seven years a martyr to rheumatism. She told me that she thought she had suffered the pains of death a thousand times. Yet, amidst all her sufferings, she had been gloriously sustained by grace; and when I saw her she was, I think, the most substantially happy Christian I ever knew.

I have, in that city, encountered poverty in its most wretched forms—enfeebled and faint—panting in the heated garret, and languishing in the damp cell, upon its pallet of straw, where it was seldom seen, except by those who earnestly sought it out. My mind often reverts to those scenes, grate-

ful to my Heavenly Father that I have been privileged to visit his afflicted poor, and point those by the world abandoned and forgotten, to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. I have learned much, also, of the impositions that are practiced, no doubt far more frequently than is generally supposed, upon the unfortunate prisoner. Their tales of woe and suffering have fallen upon my ear when my tears have been mingled with theirs, in view of such miserable correction, and, not unfrequently, such gross imposition and injustice as were there practiced upon both the prisoner and the public ; but I was obliged to hold my peace, or my access to the unfortunate would be cut off.

In the spring of 1848 I was again visited with sore bereavement. My elder brother, of whom I have often spoken, died, very suddenly, of hemorrhage, leaving a broken-hearted companion, and a large circle of deeply afflicted friends. When I removed to East Brooklyn he had purchased a residence there, that he might be near me ; for we were connected by more sacred ties than those of brotherhood. He was a precious, dear Christian, and he died in full prospect of eternal life. He was the last, except myself, of the five members of my father's family, who so nearly at the same time, in the spring of 1831, united with the M. E. Church. During my sickness, in Brooklyn, he had watched over me with an affectionate anxiety, that endeared him more than ever to my heart. The health of my family was usually good while I remained in

Newark. During this time I was engaged in no business of a secular kind, except negotiating an exchange of my property there for property in Brooklyn, in which I finally succeeded. When this was accomplished, having nothing to detain me there, I returned to Brooklyn, and took up my residence in Washington Avenue, where I commenced the improvement of some property I had purchased. Myself and wife then joined the Carlton Avenue Church, of which we remained members until 1851, when, in company with some others, we united in organizing the Summerfield Chapel charge, in Washington Avenue.

During this year I was much occupied in the improvement of my property in Washington Avenue, and particularly in building a residence for my family. I was not conscious, however, of any relaxation in religious duties. I had been appointed a class-leader, and my time was occupied in the duties of this office, and frequently aiding my brethren, the preachers, in filling their appointments. In the spring of 1852, in consequence of the impaired state of my wife's health, as well as of my own, we left Brooklyn, and took board at Newburgh, Orange County, for a year. Here we united with the M. E. Church in Second-street, the only church of our order at that time in the place, although a second church was organized there the same year.

This proved to be an eventful year with me. In the church and its associations I enjoyed many memorable seasons. I shall never forget my inter-

course in public and in private with the honored pastor of the church in Newburgh at that time, the Rev. C. B. Sing. I found him one of the most noble and familiar pastors with whom it was ever my privilege to become acquainted, and in confidential and friendly intercourse with him, I was very much edified and blessed. I had also many opportunities of preaching and laboring, not so much in the town of Newburgh as in other towns in the county. The mountain scenery, rich with associations of revolutionary times, was a source of constant delight to me, and I revelled in the wealth of nature and grace. This year, too, my eldest daughter experienced a change of heart, and joined the church with us. But the days were not all sunshine; a sister of my wife, after a long and painful illness, sank down in our presence in the arms of death. My secular affairs, too, gave me some annoyance. Some property that I had taken in exchange for that at Newark, had been sold for back taxes during a former absence from the city, and the time for redemption had expired, leaving the title to property, worth about \$3,000, in the hands of a man who had bid it in at a corporation sale for about \$20. The lawyer who had examined the title to the property, had in some way overlooked unpaid taxes. I was therefore entirely unacquainted with the claim on the part of the corporation, and the man who purchased took good care to keep me ignorant of the state of the case until the time for redemption expired, when he made his demand for possession. Calling to see him, I found him of that class from

whom I had nothing to hope but from the law. In this we have been engaged up to the present hour, nearly four years, and the end is not yet.

CHAPTER XVII.

RETURN TO BROOKLYN—IMPROVED HEALTH—PREACH LESS THAN FORMERLY—REASONS WHY—LEAVE CARLTON AVENUE AND JOIN THE CHURCH IN WASHINGTON AVENUE—CLOSE OF THE NARRATIVE—SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN—MAXIMS.

IN the spring of the year 1853 I returned to Washington Avenue, Brooklyn. My own health and that of my wife had greatly improved, and I commenced at once further improvements of my property there, and myself and family again united with the Carlton Avenue church, then under the pastoral care of Rev. S. A. Seaman, an intelligent, familiar and social man of God, with whom I had great Christian liberty and enjoyment.

During this and the two following years, although much engaged in other spiritual labors, both in and out of the church, yet my preaching labors were less than they had formerly been. This arose from several causes. Having been absent from the city, my return was not generally known. Places, also, that I had before been accustomed to supply, were now supplied by others; besides, the pulpits of our city churches were now occupied by a class of preachers who desired but little pulpit help, and for that little, on account of the superior efficiency of those who were stated pastors, making the contrast

great between their own preaching and that of the local brethren, the latter were less frequently called upon. In addition to all this, I had become so much engaged in secular business, that both body and mind needed the rest of the Sabbath, and I was less inclined than formerly to accept invitations to preach at a distance. I was much occupied employing mechanics, making and carrying out plans, in building for myself during the first year after my return, and during the second and third, namely, in 1854 and 1855, for my brother and his partner in business, and in finishing what of my own had been left incomplete.

On the 21st of June, 1855, I was ordained a deacon in the church of God, by the Rev. Bishop Janes, having been elected to that office by the New-York East Conference.

In the spring of 1856, my residence being nearer the Washington Avenue church than the church with which we were connected, by the desire of my family we changed our church membership from Carlton to Washington Avenue, where we now remain acceptable members, that is to say, myself, wife and elder daughter, the other not yet having given her heart to God. Here, then, I raise mine Ebenezer, and in the fulness of a grateful heart, exclaim, hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

* * * * *

A PARTING WORD.

HAVING thus closed my brief narrative, I shall take the liberty of recording here some general maxims, which I deem of great importance. I have proved their value in my own experience, and they will benefit all who will consent to observe them. I recommend them particularly to the young, and those just embarking upon the stormy wave of life's business and responsibilities. One object in writing at all was, that others may profit by my experience. I may, without vanity, say, that in a reasonable way I have been successful in life. I am to-day, and always have been since I experienced religion, satisfied with my lot in life. I have sometimes been in the hands of the oppressor and the unjust, of such miserable beings as lurk along the paths of litigation, into which others besides the unwary sometimes fall. From their snares, my experience has assured me, he comes with the most cheerful heart who has made the least calculation upon receiving either mercy or justice. If unhappily you should be engaged in litigation, whether successful or unsuccessful, expect to suffer.

First of all, honor God, and respect religion, even if you do not enjoy it. Set your face against drinking drams, smoking or chewing tobacco, and profane or filthy conversation.

Never do business on a large or small scale on

borrowed capital ; it is an almost certain way to fall into the hands of the oppressor.

Debts are always unsafe investments.

They are among the "facilities" at which I have always looked with a suspicious eye. Beware of them, for they ruin many.

Never cherish a desire to become very rich, or to be reputed so. This desire frequently leads to debts, and debts lead generally to embarrassment and ruin.

Avoid small debts as well as large ones. In many instances a list of small debts is more dangerous than one large one.

My invariable rule always has been, never to engage the services of others until I had first made my arrangements to reward them with their proper equivalent and at the proper time.

I have never been anxious to store up garments or gold, to gratify my own sight or attract the eyes of others. I once bought, and carried for a short time, a gold watch and chain, but I became ashamed of its fantastical appearance, and was glad to dispose of it and procure one of silver.

My standard of right and duty has not been the opinion of others, but that which commended itself to my own conscience in the sight of God. The smiles or frowns of men have not moved me ; my object has been without reference to these, to know first what was right, and secondly to do it.

In the business affairs of life it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong. Never fret or murmur over losses, great or small. With meekness endure what you cannot cure. My plan has been to con-

sult the will of God, and make my complaints to him in all the wrongs I am called to suffer.

My uniform practice has been, never to require others to do for me what I could do for myself.

Activity of hands and mind I have inculcated and practiced.

When a man becomes too good, or wise, or rich to labor with head or hands, and relies entirely upon others, he will soon be thrown from his orbit, and those closely connected with him in temporal or spiritual matters, had better separate themselves from him as soon as possible, if they do not desire to suffer by his fall.

In all important undertakings I have consulted the wise and experienced, that wisdom and prudence may not be divorced.

I have always tried to cherish and cultivate a proper spirit of benevolence. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." I have always found "there is a luxury in doing good." I have no respect for that benevolence that costs nothing, nor have I ever honored that which courts the praise of men. True benevolence relieves the proper object and honors God. It goes not a step beyond this, and here I close my purse. These principles and maxims have been useful to me, and I recommend them to others.

The path in which I have walked has secured me a home, and brought peace and prosperity there. I recommend that path to others.

I have been poor, and I am not now rich, as many men estimate riches; but I possess a sufficiency of

this world's goods. I may, then, stand between the rich and poor, within speaking distance of both; and I say to the poor, envy not the rich, neither in their gold, their honors, their happiness, nor their safety. They pay dearly for all they have. They walk a path of anxiety that your feet do not enter. You can sleep when they are wakeful. Your appetite relishes common fare, while their's loathes that which to you seems delicious. You are strong and rugged; they are weak and feeble. You are not hunted by the rogue or assassin, but may even leave your doors unlocked at night, and still be secure, while they live in constant peril and anxiety, and must secure their doors with bolts and bars. You and your family are not expected to keep pace with the extravagancies of the age, in the sacrifice of property and comfort, and the health of yourself and family. Your children are not expected to be only half-covered with fine trappings, while their nakedness smarts with heat or cold. They are not required to make such sacrifices as these at the shrine of fashion. From all these burdens, grievous to be borne, you may be free. You may need some things, but your sufferings will not compare with those of the rich. I say, then, to you, envy not the rich.

Again, I say to the rich, despise not the poor, nor lightly esteem them. Remember their state of dependence may yet be yours. No circumstances of wealth can secure you from possible loss. The Great Giver of all good, and the Dispenser of all blessings, has only, in his providence, appointed you as

one of his almoners. The amount in your possession is charged against you, and the proper demands of yourself and family will be generously allowed; but beyond these, and even of them, his language is, "occupy till I come," and a day of reckoning is at hand. The poor are presented as the objects of your special care. They have been placed both in the church and in the world to test the faithfulness of the stewards of God's heritage. The real necessities of all men are the same. Necessary food and raiment, and protection from the inclemency of the weather, are our only real necessities. What the poor may lack of these essentials has been placed in your hands; see to it that it is not withheld from them.

In acts of benevolence and charity be your own almoner. If it be possible, employ no go-between. Never publish your benevolence abroad. Many would rather suffer want than to have it known that they were relieved by charity. Respect this sentiment, and spare the feelings of the poor.

There is a mutual dependence between the rich and poor, and neither can afford to despise or lose the assistance of the other.

Finally: the rich man is liable to greater loss than the poor man; for when he dies his wealth descends to others; but when the poor man dies, no man is his heir; no greedy expectant rejoices in his death.

The world's capital is labor. Man cannot, it is true, "live by bread alone;" but without bread the race must perish, and without labor the means

of living cannot be procured. Let labor, therefore, be considered honorable in all.

Having offered these general remarks, upon the principles by the practice of which I have attained temporal success, I propose to speak briefly of the rules I have observed in spiritual things.

At the beginning of my spiritual career, I considered religion not only as an inward life, but an active principle; not only as joy and peace in the heart, but as a principle of practical life, by which I must be governed in all my relations, both to God and man. I began with self-denial, and at once adopted its practice. I found this, however, not so hard as might be supposed. Having given myself entirely to God at the first, the old man had been crucified, and the new man was greatly disposed to serve God. The second thing I noticed was cross-bearing. This I found was really a test. I felt that to discharge this duty faithfully, I must know, under all circumstances, what duty really was. I was conscious of an active monitor within which I feared not to trust. Him I followed.

In accordance with these suggestions, I found it necessary to search the Scriptures. Then I set it down as an unquestioned duty, that I must have prayers at least twice each day—not in a lazy, but in a faithful, earnest manner. Circumstances, too, might arise that would make it right to increase this duty. There was private prayer, and social prayer, and family prayer, and public prayer, more or less, at once recognised, and a vow recorded that I would not shrink from their performance. It was

very clear to me that the Christian should be a witness for God. This I early determined to be; yet, to do this duty, has sometimes required a great exercise of self-denial. It has been a maxim with me that the path of duty is the only path of safety, and I have always, by God's help, when duty was clear, been enabled to open my mouth, either in prayer or testimony for the cause of Christ, although it has frequently been done with fear and trembling. To this firm purpose of heart to bear the cross, and do my duty in the best manner I could, I attribute, under God, whatever of success has attended my Christian course. Ignorant as I was when I entered the church, God has kindly led me on, from one degree of grace to another, until, counting me worthy, he has placed me in the ministry, and authorized me to proclaim his gospel to my fellow-men. This I regard as the greatest honor among men; and it is my highest ambition to be accounted a standard-bearer of the cross.

“Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His Name—
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold! Behold the Lamb.”

Miscellaneous Thoughts,

CONSISTING OF

FUGITIVE PIECES,

IN

PROSE AND RHYME.

THOUGHTS ON PRAYER.

THE word prayer is a short one, and easily spoken. Without reflection, when pronounced, it may be unimpressive, but as the thoughtful mind dwells upon it, it becomes more extended in its signification and more absorbing in its interests; so much so that pages may be written upon it, while the full sense and importance of the word are still undeveloped.

Many things, both wise and true, have been said both for and against written forms of prayer, to be used in solemn approach to God. Much also has been written respecting the proper attitude in prayer, and upon the different kinds of prayer; the frequency with which prayer should be offered; the length and loudness of prayer, with the objects which should be remembered in prayer. These, however, and a multitude of thoughts connected with prayer, might have employed our pen, but we propose first to answer, so far as we may, this single question: What is prayer? In order to answer intelligibly, we will first define the word. Our definition is taken partly from Watson's Institutes and partly from the Word of God. Prayer is a solemn addressing of the mind to God, as the fountain of being and happiness, the ruler of the world and the father of the family of man, through Jesus Christ, for such things as are according to his will. If we

analyze this definition, it will be perceived that it is made up of several distinct elements. 1. *Prayer is a solemn act.* This solemnity is not only in the outward act, but also in the mind and heart. Without the deepest inward feeling of devotion, prayer is but solemn mockery. 2. *Prayer is an address of the mind to the Deity.* This implies something more than the language of the lips, or a well-studied and arranged form of words, though that form might seem to recognise the true character of God, and embrace what would seem to be fitting and appropriate for ourselves. Indeed, a petition like this, might be presented by the holiest angel, with all the graces of heavenly eloquence, and yet not rise above the head of the petitioner. Prayer, to be acceptable, must be the combined fruit of the heart and mind.

God searches the heart. He reads the most hidden of our thoughts. He has knowledge of our desires at the very moment of their birth, and scans the motives that prompt them. He accepts only truth and sincerity. He will have nothing in which the heart does not participate.

Prayer being addressed to God, he who offers it, under the influence of a true faith, will always be heard. For God is omnipresent. He is everywhere, and ever ready to listen and respond, according to the necessities of the petitioner. It is a solemn and fearful thought, that God is ever present, and takes note of our most secret thoughts; that we are at all times, and wherever we may be, undergoing the judgment of a supreme and righteous

being. Wherever a faithful heart sends up its prayer, whether upon land or upon the sea—whether from the cottage of the peasant or from the palace of a king—from the thronged city or from the depths and silence of the forest, it may be said, in the language of the Psalmist, “Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

The Christian recognises in God, and in him alone, the author of his being, and the giver of every good and perfect gift. To him he looks for raiment, for shelter and for his daily bread. To him he refers all things—and implicitly relies on his goodness and wisdom for direction. Looking thus to God as the author of our being, we find that the law he has imposed and the promises he has made, are happily adapted to our senses, necessities and desires. His bounties are spread out before us in splendor and profusion; yet the pleasure with which a Christian views them is not un-mixed with fear. He looks upon them as pleasant fruit. He surveys them as our first parent may at first have surveyed the treasures of Eden, after the great injunction was pronounced; to be partaken of and to be enjoyed under the conditions imposed by God and in conformity to his will.

The Christian, feeling his own weakness, and conscious of his dependence on God, and of the need of consulting him, prays for guidance as to how, under what circumstances and to what extent these heavenly gifts should be used. Without God's sanctification, the apparent blessings of this world

may be turned to evil. They may prove to be shells without kernels, and shadows without substance. Fed with the good things of the world, and without God's blessing upon them, we may thrive as the wicked sometimes thrive. We may wax fat in the riches of the world, but we may only acquire the fatness of the ox prepared for slaughter. We may flourish and grow strong like the oak, flinging out our brave arms in defiance of the storm, only to be riven at last by the lightning of Jehovah.

The enlightened mind recognises in God the ruler of the world—the father of the great family of man. It acknowledges in the wonders of the earth, sky and sea, a sovereign unseen, yet infinite in wisdom, goodness and power. The evidence of these perfections is seen in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath; on the crest of the mountain and in the depth of the valley. It is found in the summer sea, basking in the glories of the sun; it is declared in the mighty waves that burst upon its shores. We find on every side unmistakable evidence of one supreme and controlling mind. The planets move in their spheres, and observe the laws imposed upon them. The seasons come at their appointed times, and perform their missions for the good and comfort of man. Yet man, the recipient of God's beneficence, for whose happiness and comfort these laws were made, is alone rebellious. The condescension of God is in this distinctly shown. Here, indeed, is encouragement to go to our Father in Heaven, and ask for such things as may be conducive to our happiness, or, which is the same

thing, pray for such favors as may conform to his will.

The definition which we have given of prayer assumes the necessity of its being offered in the name of Jesus Christ. It is not, however, insisted that the *name* of Christ should be so often or in such a manner spoken as to possess a prominent place, however scriptural it may seem, or however grateful it may be to the ear of the supplicant. But it is insisted, as a condition to the efficacy of prayer, that the mind should entertain the visible image of Christ and Him crucified, and co-operate with the emotions in the exercise of faith. Prayer, without this image held by faith, can be of no avail. The heart is not right with God, and no form of words can reach the ear of Him, the Searcher of hearts, *without* this essential requisite.

The last thought suggested by our definition of prayer is, that it shall comprehend, in its objects, such things, and such only, as are in accordance with the will of God. Assuming this to be an essential characteristic of prayer, the question arises, How is this divine will to be ascertained? What means has God provided us for learning His will? Happily for man, this problem is easily and readily solved. He has provided us with reason and understanding. He has spread out before our senses the mighty mechanism of His hands, dedicated to the necessities and happiness of man. In this vast and varied machinery we discover the wisdom, power and beneficence of a Supreme Being, to whom conscience alone tells us we are responsible.

From that inward sense of responsibility must necessarily be derived *some* knowledge of the divine will ; and, according to that sense and that knowledge, must the heathen, who hear not the Gospel, finally be answerable to God.

Divine revelation exhibits man to himself, and the relations he holds to his Maker. In it he is furnished, as it were, with a catalogue of his inward impulses to resist God's will, and to close his soul to the entrance of spiritual light. Divine revelation declares, in every variety of manner, man's duty to God. It affords the true history of the creation of the world, of the creation and fall of man, of his disobedience to God, and the awful consequences thereof. It informs us that we are all sinners, and that nothing but a conformity to the divine will can save us from eternal death. The will of God is found on every page of the Scriptures. It is spoken to the understanding and to the heart, and with such a light before him no one can be at loss to know what God would have him to do. The prayer which Christ taught his disciples may be regarded as a model for all men—whatever may be their conditions or circumstances in life. It embraces all of the leading topics of prayer, save that of a mediator and intercessor, who was the great Author and Teacher himself. Let us analyze this model : First. *Our Father which art in Heaven* ; implying by the word *Father*, that he is our protector and benefactor ; that we should love and obey him ; that he is not only *my* Father, but that he is *our* Father ; the Father of all the human family ;

and that we should not only pray for ourselves, but for our fellow-men ; that he is not only our Father, but he is our Father in *Heaven*—the sovereign and Father of all men. Second. *Hallowed be thy name.* In this address we are taught the sacredness of God's name, and with what feelings of solemnity it should always be pronounced—confirming the injunction uttered from Sinai—thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Third. *Thy kingdom come.* Here we ask that the kingdom of Christ may be established on earth, and that we and that all men may surrender, unconditionally, their bodies, their lives and their souls to the keeping of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Fourth. *Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven.* Assuming, as we are authorized to do, that Heaven is the abode of angels and spirits of the just, whose bliss and happiness consist in glorifying God in the performance of His will, whose hearts are attuned to God, and in perfect harmony with him, we pray that the hearts of men may be brought to like harmony, to the end that His will *may* be done on earth *as it is done* in Heaven. Fifth. *Give us this day our daily bread.* This implies that we are dependent on God for whatever is necessary for the preservation of life—the life of the body and the life of the soul. That though so dependent, we need only concern ourselves for what may be needful for *the day*. That we shall “take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.” Sixth. *And forgive us our debts, &c.* As we forgive those who may have wronged us, or

who in this world may be indebted to us, so do we ask our Heavenly Father to forgive us. Seventh. *Lead us not into temptation.* That we may do the will of God we pray not to be placed or led into such positions as are calculated to stimulate our evil natures and make us forget God's presence and displeasure. Eighth. *But deliver us from evil.* Conscious of our sinful proclivities, and our daily and hourly liability to fall into the clutches and dominion of sin, we pray to Him, whose power is infinite, to *deliver* us from its bondage. Ninth. *For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever.* The heart, submitting to the law of God and receiving the Spirit, must recognise him as King and Sovereign over all; and as a sovereign, possessed of power to vindicate his laws, and entitled to glory. God is eternal, and as he never changes, His attributes must remain *for ever and ever.* Amen. So let it be. Here is an absolute surrender of all things to our Father in Heaven, implying entire faith in his power, wisdom and goodness, and a sincere and heartfelt wish that, according to his will, let all things be.

Such is the prayer taught by our Saviour to his disciples, embracing all that a sincere and repentant heart, approaching God through Jesus Christ, need ask of our Father in Heaven.

THE MILLENNIUM.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER,
CHAPTER III. 13.

“Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

THE subject matter of this text possesses vast interest to every Christian heart and mind. The apostle has shadowed forth—dimly, it is true, yet with sufficient distinctness to arrest our attention—a state of things upon earth which the believer must delight to contemplate. It is a picture which fills his heart with the sweetest emotions, and gives assurance of the final triumph of good over evil, and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom on earth. Though dim in outline, and still more so in detail, the picture here presented must lead the believer to the most pleasing reflections. Seen, however, as it is, only through the words of prophecy, and yet resting in the future, it does not produce like impressions upon all. In the interpretations sought to be given to this subject of prophetic inspiration, the most studious and learned have disagreed. They differ not as to the coming of the event, but they suggest different views touching the character of the event itself. By the Millennium we understand a period of a thousand years, during which the kingdom of Christ shall be established on earth ;

and in consequence thereof, a thousand years of peace and harmony among men, and of reconciliation of man to God, through Christ, his King and Saviour. This is a doctrine taught us by Revelation; and hence the claim it has upon our notice. Prophecy is seldom, if ever, as clear and specific in its statements as history. History portrays events that have transpired. Prophecy shadows forth an outline which is yet to be filled up. The details of prophecy are comparatively few; and all that we can know of them is, that they will be such as harmonize with that which is directly revealed. What is, and what is not in keeping with this prophetic outline, is a matter concerning which the ablest and most candid minds may differ. The Scriptures are constantly pointing to a future state of things on earth, touching the relations of man to God—such as has not existed since his fatal disobedience in the Garden of Eden. We will note a few instances: “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah xi. 9.) It is clear, from this and the context, that reference is made to the entire subjugation of the earth to Christ the Saviour: that is, of the men on earth. “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.” (Jer. xxxi. 34.) And further, as a promise made to Christ: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy posses-

sion." And further, "And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." We recognise in this the stone which the builders rejected, and which is destined to become the head of the corner. (Dan. ii. 35.) It was promised in Eden; it was announced in the star of Bethlehem. Eighteen centuries have witnessed its motion and its growth; and though we know not what time must elapse before its mission is performed, it cannot be doubted that the prophecy will be fulfilled. If any thing be wanting to strengthen our faith in this coming condition of man upon earth, we have but to listen to the instruction of Christ to his disciples, touching the subject of our prayer to God, *i. e.*, that we should, among other things, pray that God's kingdom may come, and that his will may be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. From such authorities we are bound to conclude that there will be a time when the kingdom of God shall cover the earth. We are further instructed by the Revelations of God, that Christ himself shall reign in that happy day. It is promised: "The government shall be upon his shoulder." (Isaiah ix. 6.) "Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh." (Zech. ix. 9.) Christ is a king that cometh as such; and the saints will see him, and say: "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints." (Rev. xv. 3.) "And there were great voices in Heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." (Rev. xi. 15.) The inspired apostle, he whom Christ loved,

here beholds the fulfilment of the blessed promise. He beholds the kingdoms of this world subdued to Christ—the fulfilment of the promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

Although the Holy Bible furnishes many authorities for the belief in a Millennium, we think sufficient have already been quoted to establish the point, that in that day Christ will be King—the King of all Saints. It may be well to notice, in further reference to that day, that the Scriptures give it a variety of titles; for instance, "*day of God*," "*day of the Lord*," "*day of judgment*" and "*the last day*," with many other significant titles. But we notice, further, that the *day* will be of a thousand years' duration. And we may remark, in this connection, that the chapter from which our text is taken is devoted almost entirely to this subject. In the seventh verse Peter calls it "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." And in the eighth verse, in order to press it more strongly on our minds, he says: "Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Showing us how little is lost, even though it be the day of life itself, if, in its loss, we gain that other day which is a thousand years. Further, in the 90th Psalm and 4th verse, we read: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past." And this day of a thousand years, the Psalmist tells us, is the day when God shall have said, "Return, ye children of men." And let us note, lastly, on this point, the 20th chapter of Revelations, and par-

ticularly the first three verses. They read as follows: "And I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years shall be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season." We think this entire chapter points clearly to the conclusion, that *that day* will be one of a thousand years' duration.

Having referred to what we deem sufficient Scriptural authority for believing that the day will come in which Christ shall reign over the nations, as he now doth over the saints, and that that day will be a thousand years, we now submit some views touching the order or manner in which so happy and important an event shall be brought about. We deem it reasonable to suppose that it will come as the brightness of the morning, when many are crying peace and plenty; or as it was in the days of Noah, when man was eating and drinking and enjoying the world, and unbelieving in reference to the event just upon him. We say this in regard to *many*, but not of all, for doubtless there will be some who are righteous, who will be waiting and prepared for the coming of Christ—who being warned of the event, will, like those who prepared the ark, and like the careful virgins who filled their lamps with oil, be prepared and ready for the Lord.

In the language of Daniel, "None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

We now proceed to notice what we understand to be the order of this great event. In the first six verses of the 10th chapter of Revelations, we find that John saw a mighty angel come down from Heaven, and stand with "his right foot upon the sea and his left foot upon the earth." From which we may conclude that he will be seen from, and have dominion over both earth and sea. "He was clothed with a cloud," from which thunders, as from Sinai, uttered their voices. The cloud was to hide his presence, that all might not be consumed. What those thunders uttered we are not told. Upon the face of this cloud there was a rainbow, proclaiming the sign of the covenant. This mighty angel was the angel of the covenant; the sign which he bore upon the face of the cloud; and lifting up his hands to Heaven, "swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are; and the earth, and the things that therein are; and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer." Here we may suppose Christ leaves his mediatorial seat, proclaiming the end of time. What follows this end, we are informed: "And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." (Rev. vii. 1.) How are these words to be understood? If the four winds of the earth are, according to the

literal meaning of the verse, to be stayed, so that the wind shall cease to blow upon any part of the earth, what result might be expected? It is well presented by Adam Clark, in his comment on a part of the tenth verse of the chapter from which our text is taken. The words of the Scripture are these: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth, also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Touching the meaning of these words, Dr. Clark writes as follows: "As the heavens here, and in the passages above, mean the whole atmosphere, in which all the terrestrial vapors are lodged; and as water itself is composed of two gases, eighty-five parts in weight of oxygen and fifteen of hydrogen, or two parts in volume of the latter, and one of the former, (for if these quantities be put together, and several electric sparks pass through them, a chemical union takes place, and water is the product; and *vice versa*, if the galvanic spark be made to pass through water, a portion of the fluid is immediately decomposed into its two constituent gases, oxygen and hydrogen.) And as the electric or etherial fire is that which, in all likelihood, God will use in the general conflagration, the noise occasioned by the application of this fire to such an immense congeries of aqueous particles as float in the atmosphere, must be terrible in the extreme.

"Put a drop of water on an anvil, place over it a piece of red hot iron, and strike the iron with a hammer, on the part directly over the drop of water,

and the report will be as loud as a musket." How inconceivably terrific—how awful, beyond any human conception, must be the thunders and explosions that will denote the coming of that great day! The learned commentator goes on to say: "When, then, the whole strength of these opposite agents is brought into a state of conflict, the noise, the thunderings, the innumerable explosions, (till every particle of water on the earth and in the atmosphere is, by the action of the fire, reduced into its component gaseous parts,) will be frequent, loud, confounding and terrific, beyond any comprehension but that of God himself. * * * When the fire has conquered and decomposed the water, the elements—the hydrogen and oxygen airs or gases (the former of which is most highly inflammable, and the latter an eminent supporter of all combustion)—will occupy distinct regions of the atmosphere; the hydrogen, by its very great levity ascending to the top, while the oxygen, from its superior specific gravity, will keep *upon* or *near* the surface of the earth; and thus, if different substances be once ignited, the fire, which is supported in this case not only by the oxygen, which is one of the constituents of atmospheric air, but also by a great additional quantity of oxygen obtained from decomposition of all aqueous vapors, will rapidly seize on all other substances, on all terrestrial particles, and the whole frame of nature will be necessarily torn in pieces, and thus the earth and its works be burned up."

We think that Adam Clark has here figured most

graphically to our minds the great event to which our text refers. There is, however, before the consummation of things above referred to, an express intimation of the appearing of another angel from the East, "having the seal of the living God," and who "cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads." John (according to the seventh chapter) saw them sealed; and (ninth verse) he saw not only them, "but a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues," standing "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."

I understand from this, a revelation to John, that on that great day, all who had lived righteous (the living and the dead) should ascend in their natural bodies, robed in white, and surround the great white throne on which Christ is seated—perhaps just above the aerial heavens—there to witness the scene of destruction enacting beneath them. This is the first resurrection, referred to by Paul, in 1st Thes. iv. 15, 16, 17. "For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up

together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The period of which we speak is also spoken of at large in the 20th chapter of the Revelation of St. John, from which we make one quotation: "But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished—this is the first resurrection." While the righteous are thus with Christ, their Lord and king, above the earth, the natural causes to which we have referred commence their operations, and the world is consumed by fire. In this fearful conflagration, every material particle of which the earth is composed, shall be consumed. Nevertheless, the structure of the globe shall not be annihilated, but it will be so purified by fire, that when cooled, it shall appear like a globe of glass. This may seem at first like a flight of fancy, but I deem it to be the legitimate teachings of the Holy Scriptures. Peter tells us, in the verse immediately preceding our text, "looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Peter does not speak of annihilation, but says, they shall be dissolved and melted with fervent heat. John speaks to this point when he says, (Rev. iv. 6,) "And before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal." Now, this cannot be a figure of speech, for he expressly says, not what it *is like*, but what it *is*—"before the throne there was a sea of glass." Again, John says, (Rev. xv. ii.,) "And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire;

and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." Now, if my view be correct, this earth was clear as crystal in the undisturbed rays of the king of day, thronged with the unnumbered millions of the saints bearing the harps of God, and singing the songs of Moses and the Lamb, around the throne of Christ, their King—who hath with them descended here to dwell for a thousand years. Upon them the second death hath no power. This accounts for the comforting language of the text—"Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Well may he therefore add, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace without spot, and blameless." Well, also, may holy Job, when passing through the deep waters, cheer his sinking soul, by anticipations of the glory of the latter day. "I know," said the deeply afflicted patriarch, when every earthly hope seemed fading, and the temple of his prosperity going down before the might of the tempest, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Thus, when every earthly hope eluded his grasp, his faith clung to the glorious prospect of the latter day glory.

This is the glorious Millennial day anticipated by

Christian faith, which forms the burden of so many prayers, and which John saw and more fully described in Rev. xxi. 1—"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no more sea." Let the reader refer to the chapter; it is too long to quote.

But the question may arise, where are the wicked while the righteous rejoice with exceeding great joy? I answer, in the words of St. John, (Rev. xx. 5,) "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." They await the second resurrection. The prophet Malachi also refers to this event—Malachi iv. 1, 2, 3—"For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall; and ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts." This clearly shows that the wicked will be consumed in the final conflagration, and that for a thousand years their ashes shall be trodden under foot by the saints.

When this thousand years of happiness and honor for the righteous shall have passed, then will come the second resurrection and the final judgment. After which it is said of the wicked, (Matt. xxv. 46,)

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.” While of the righteous dead it is written that they shall then be borne away into life eternal.

The question may be asked, when will this event take place? It is proper to say that different opinions are entertained on this point. I desire not to enter into any controversy, yet I shall, I trust, be pardoned if I indicate my opinion, while I spare the reader the weariness of perusing the argument which conducts to it. I believe that when six thousand years shall have passed from the time when the earth first brought forth sin, it will be purified by fire. That period, according to the common chronology, will be about the year 1996 of the Christian era.

GOD'S HOUSE.

“Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.” Ps. xxvi. 8.

What kind of house does God most love?
Which will his Spirit most approve?
This point may well our minds engage,
Living in this church-building age.

No doubt the temples God demands
Are those not made with human hands;
“Ye are the temples,” Christ has said—
We dedicate what God has made.

But still a house in which to meet,
And offer worship at his feet,
And keep the feast, and preach his word,
Must be erected to the Lord.

Church architecture then should serve
To show how men may best preserve
Due fitness, with respect sincere,
When temples to God's name they rear.

But “artists” are not yet quite sure
What style this object will secure,
Hence art is free, and plays the fool,
In styles that outrage every school.

Some build the Church with steeple high,
To point the sinner to the sky;
As though this were a better plan,
Than to exhort the erring man.

Expensive churches others dream,
Show reverence for the great Supreme,
And to sustain their worldly views,
Would pawn the house and rent the pews.

But not to criticise the schools,
Entrenched behind a thousand rules,
We venture to some hints impart,
With modest air and trembling heart.

We think that churches should be plain,
Floors, walls and seats, without a stain,
Quite out of debt, and free for all
Who choose to hear the gospel call.

The world's distinctions should not dare
To mar its peace by flaunting there;
Let vain conceit and swelling pride,
Within its courts be laid aside.

Within the temple of the Lord
Let sinners listen to his word,
And rich and poor this truth receive,
"He shall be damned who won't believe."

Then shall the world be blessed indeed,
And he that runs shall stop and read,
What church, and priest, and people state,
"This is God's house and Heaven's gate."

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EDUCATION.

WE often hear it said, "There is a time for all things;" implying from this, that there are certain periods in our lives, or that there are certain predicaments touching place and circumstances most suitable for particular actions and duties. We think there is no subject to which this sentiment applies with greater force than to that of education. It would be difficult to find any one who has passed, or who has but reached the period of ripe manhood, whose conscience is satisfied with what he has accomplished in life. To the most industrious and vigilant will there come sometimes hours of sorrow and regret—of vain and fruitless remorse—visions of shattered hopes, of time wasted, of opportunities neglected and lost.

Who would not pay almost any price, if by doing so he could redeem the time he has squandered in early life? There is probably no man, who can conscientiously say that he has done his best. But there are thousands to whom the world has ascribed energy and perseverance, who, instead of rejoicing at what they have done, are daily regretting that they have done so little. There are few, if indeed there are any, who reach their mark in life. According to the standard which every man erects for himself, he must concede that his life has been a failure. He has not come up to his aim; and rather

than confess his abstract inability to have done so, he attributes his failure—and in most cases very justly—to mis-spent time, indolence and irregular will in early days. If these things are so, surely all men—and particularly the young—are admonished to be up and doing. Let the youth who would arrive at a bright, useful and honorable manhood, consider well that *time* is his best friend. That the days, aye, the very hours and moments that are coming and passing away, constitute his real capital. That they are his chief treasures; and that even in this world, he must account for the manner in which he has employed them. “Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come, as one who travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.” Such is the language of Solomon, and such is the language of wisdom, addressed particularly to the young. Youth is the season for education. It is the time for physical, moral and mental culture—the period of discipline. It is, of all periods of man’s existence, the very one when time comes with its greatest claims. It is the period when the body and mind are acquiring shape, strength and character; and according to the training then imposed, will be, in a great degree, the moral, physical and intellectual character of the man. The loss of mental culture in childhood or youth can never be fully repaired. The mind is then retentive, susceptible, and in a condition to receive and retain the impressions made upon it. It is a season more favorable than any other for the acquisition of

knowledge, the mind being then most at liberty. The harassing cares, the responsibilities and incidents of business do not then, as in riper years, occupy the mind and engross its faculties. The mind can more readily dedicate all its functions to the acquisition of knowledge, and submit to such discipline as will best develope its powers. Education, properly considered, we deem to be rather a means than an end. Although we are, doubtless, growing more and more learned in the philosophy of life, as we add to our experience, yet the knowledge we thus derive is not such as we include in the word education. Our education, such as it may be, is the *preparation* which youth makes for manhood. It is the training and discipline of our physical, moral and intellectual endowment for the real business of life. As youth is the only period allotted to this preparation, how important it is that it should so be improved.

The creative faculties of the mind are conceded to possess their greatest activity in middle life. The mind is then supposed to have attained its utmost powers. The materials on which it is to work are supposed to have been collected; the faculties, which we may regard as its tools, must then have acquired their best vigor and edge. Then, if ever, the mind must be ready for the real business and duties of life. There can be but little time for study—no time, comparatively, for the acquisition of materials, or for preparation and sharpening of tools. For the better or for the worse, we must then proceed to perform, as we may, our mission in

life. There is no retreat. There is no going back to complete, or even improve, our education. Duty calls to present and immediate action; the day, and the very hour has arrived when we are to be *weighed*, and account for the manner in which we have spent our youth, to God, to man and to ourselves. Who has not, on arriving at this stage in life, been made to feel his own guilt? Who has not thus been made to realize that time is the most precious of all our gifts? Remorse on such occasions is vain—the past cannot be recalled. A pearl has been thrown away, which neither repentance nor tears can restore. Let it not be forgotten, therefore, that childhood and youth are the seasons for education, the seed-time for the moral and intellectual man; and that according as we then sow, so shall the harvest be.

DEPRAVED APPETITES.

'Tis passing strange that boys can love
Tobacco and strong drink ;
That God or nature gives the taste,
No one pretends to think.

Example first inspires the thought,
Then quickly comes desire,
Urging the slumbering appetite
The habit to acquire.

But appetite and fond desire
Are not the friends of man—
They lead the thoughtless quite astray,
And mar the Maker's plan.

Man's days on earth are but a span ;
His work requires an age ;
Yet pleasure and the love of sin,
His flying hours engage.

While time is brief and wasting fast,
And death is very near,
Temptation finds a thousand ways
To stupify his fear.

Insidious Death, in many forms,
Lurks in the pilgrim's way,
But, worse than all, man seeks himself
His safety to betray.

He often, by inventive skill,
Some baneful plan will start,
Which brings not only pain and death,
But hardness to his heart.

Disguised at first, his cherish'd work
Brings blessings on his name,
But in the end it spreads abroad
Disease, and death, and shame.

The product of the still at first
Brought healing in its wing,
But Time, that proves the works of man,
Revealed its fatal sting.

In sickness, health—in health a curse—
To blight the noblest name,
Preserved on history's brightest page,
Or on the rolls of Fame.

Strong drink will poison ev'ry source
Whence streams of bliss can flow,
Make godlike man a hideous wreck—
An outcast here below.

Children and wife—all feel his shame,
And mourn his honor slain;
They weep and pray, but tears and pray'rs
Are both alike in vain.

Another vice stalks through the land,
Blear-eyed, foul mouthed and bold,
Disgusting, nauseous, vulgar, vile,
Defiling young and old.

Tobacco chewing now I mean,
A practice which pollutes,
And brings its highest vot'ries down
Below the grade of brutes.

The one who loves the filthy weed
A vile segar can smoke,
And when these habits once are formed,
His neck must bear the yoke.

With yellow teeth and tainted breath
The slave proclaims his shame,
While slaver'd chin and linen soil'd
Publish his master's name.

Vices are seldom found alone—
In companies they throng;
One for its kindred paves the way,
Then hurries them along.

Children and friends will feel the power
Of our example, too,
And imitate our evil deeds,
Whatever we may do.

Then let each one that reads my rhyme
Observe how evil flows,
Avoid the cup, and never make
A smoke-house of his nose.

True wisdom says, begin in youth
Good habits to acquire;
Then when the eve of life draws on
You'll have your heart's desire.

A MODEL LAWSUIT.

HAVING both in prose and rhyme, in this volume, expressed my disapprobation of our present legal system, and also hinted at what I should esteem a far more expeditious and satisfactory method of settling disputes, I here present, in illustration and confirmation of my views, what I regard as a model lawsuit.

My feelings are doubtless more acute on this subject from my own unfortunate experience in seeking redress at Cæsar's judgment seat, in a case which seemed to me exceeding plain, but which has been so obscured and befogged by litigation in the courts, that after the lapse of four years, it seems now as far from settlement as when it was first placed in the hands of my legal adviser.

Not long since a difference of opinion arose between a neighbor and myself, touching some pecuniary transactions. The amount in dispute was seventy dollars, and failing to reach a harmonious solution of the question, our disagreement began to be the talk of the neighborhood, and to threaten strife and a resort to law.

I think each was, in the estimation of the other, a gentleman, both able and willing to do the thing that was right. But this was the very thing at issue. How could we both be brought to take the same view of the subject? Sympathizing friends, with the best motives in the world, came to our relief and exhorted us to keep the peace, and settle our

difficulty amicably ; but instead of closing the breach between us, it only seemed to grow wider.

Time went on, but brought no healing in his wings. My neighbor consulted his "counsel, learned in the law," and was told, without hesitation or reserve, that he was right; that he had a good defence against my claim, and if I commenced proceedings he must undoubtedly defeat me. By this time I also had consulted an equally learned counsellor, and received an "opinion" quite in accordance with my own views. We were now each more than ever convinced that law and justice was on his side, and this conviction did not assist greatly in harmonizing matters.

At this stage of the affair I had an interview with my neighbor, who had now become my antagonist. Each fortified by a legal opinion, was little disposed to yield, and matters assumed a very threatening aspect. True, neither professed to desire law, but each was determined to carry his point, and secure his rights at all hazards. To avoid litigation, I proposed to call upon his lawyer and lay the case before him in its true light, assured that he must see the case exactly as I did, and thus render the affair somewhat less desperate. To this my neighbor assented, and in my simplicity I waited upon his legal adviser, with the intention of explaining the case to him. But no sooner did the learned gentleman comprehend my object, than he cautioned me not to make any admissions to him, as they might prejudice my case on the trial. He advised me to make no statement whatever, unless I had

determined to submit the decision of the case to him. "In that case," said the gentleman, with much courtesy, "I shall be pleased to hear you, for I can then charge my costs in a business like manner, and close up the affair in regular form." I simply replied, that I had proposed to Mr. ——— to submit the matter to three persons; but I had not thought of submitting it to one, and that one his counsel; whereupon I retired, having, as the lawyers say, "taken nothing by my motion." I now began to despair of a peaceable settlement of our difficulty, and almost concluded it was decreed that we must encounter each other in court. But the alternative was so distasteful that I determined to call once more upon my neighbor, and endeavor to effect a settlement. In the conversation which ensued, I first proposed a compromise; and this was so well received that we finally came within fifteen dollars of an agreement; but here we stuck fast; and after much debate—both parties standing firm—we abandoned the attempt as hopeless. I then expressed my determination to seek to obtain my rights. "My friend," said I, "if we can't settle this matter ourselves, others must do it for us. And it seems to me there are only two ways in which it can be done. We must either go to law, or submit the matter to an arbitration. A suit at law will, perhaps, entertain some of our neighbors, and be particularly pleasant to our lawyers; and if we should not live to see the end of it, our heirs may." "Sir," remarked my opponent, "it will be a short matter, so far as I am concerned. I shall ask the decision

of but one tribunal. I shall be perfectly satisfied with that, whatever it may be, and shall never appeal from it." "Ah, sir," I replied, "we can tell better about that after we know what the decision is. It is more than probable that after one decision is rendered we shall be further from a settlement than ever." I then assured him that I greatly preferred a resort to arbitration. "You choose," said I, "one man, and I will choose another; let them choose a third, and let us bind ourselves to submit to whatever decision they may render, after a full examination of the case; then, when we get their judgment, the affair will be ended." After a long pause he replied, "Well, I'll agree to that; I'll leave the matter to A., B. and C., (naming the men,) and I will agree to abide by their decision." I remonstrated, urging that it was scarcely the fair thing that he should choose all the men; but I thanked him for the amicable spirit he exhibited; promised to think of his proposal, and see him again.

At our next interview I rejected his proposition, on the ground that he had no right to select all the arbitrators. He admitted my right to object; but without giving me time to mention a single individual, he went on and named several others—professing his readiness to submit the dispute to them. From the number he mentioned I finally selected three; and to them we mutually agreed to refer the determination of our dispute.

The umpires, on being consulted, agreed to serve; and on an evening appointed we met, and made arrangements for the trial.

One of the three men having been selected to preside, and another chosen as secretary, the object in view was stated, and the parties entered into the following agreement:

1. We mutually agree to abide by the decision of this arbitration.

2. We agree to submit the case, on the statements of the parties, without counsel or witnesses.

Each party in succession then stated his case as fully as he chose—both facts and arguments; and having answered such questions as the arbitrators chose to ask, the case was submitted, and the parties retired. A short time elapsed—which we passed in friendly conversation—when we were called back. The decision was announced to us—to which we both cheerfully submitted—burying the hatchet, and, like our neighbors around us, at the hour of rest we retired to bed, with, at least, one difficulty less to disturb us on the morrow.

Having, then, tried both the courts of law and a friendly arbitration, I think I am prepared to determine their comparative merits and disadvantages; and on every account I prefer the latter to the former. Who, then, in view of my experience, will refuse to join with me in my poem on this subject, entitled, “A New Court,” and sing—

Three honest men, together joined,
Will soon both law and justice find—
 Though little law they know.
Without delay they'll find the mark,
And bring out Justice from the dark—
 Where she delights to go.

MEMORY.

To memory's book, we always look,
For records of the past,
Her faithful care, embalms them there,
To meet us at the last.

The laws of mind, we always find,
Connect harmonious things,
And if one thought is forward brought,
It jars a thousand strings.

Sometimes for years, through smiles and tears,
The hidden thought may shine—
Like mammon's hoard, all unexplored
Within the secret mine.

Some simple word, that then is heard,
Dispels the mystic maze,
And memory bright reveals to sight
The spoils of other days.

Thus in the day, when God shall say,
That time shall be no more,
Shall memory true, bring forth to view,
A long forgotten store.

When flames of light, blaze on the night,
And God's command is heard,
Each thought conceal'd, shall be reveal'd,
With every act and word.

How will the sight, men's souls affright,
And fill them with dismay,
To see the throng come hurrying on
To meet them at that day.

What sad surprise will then arise—
Their final doom to hear,
For what they thought but harmless sport,
And practiced without fear.

The pains of hell, no tongue can tell,
But memory there will wake,
To urge the shame, and feed the flame
Of the infernal lake.

Dear friend, give heed, to what you read,
That you may life receive,
While wrath delays the Saviour prays
That you may turn and live.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG LADY.

DEAR Anna was a lovely child,
Like violet pure, or primrose wild,
 Blooming in early youth ;
Light of her home, the pride of friends,
She proved that happiness attends
 Love, purity and truth.

In Packer Institute her mind,
At Wisdom's fountain sought to find,
 What she alone can give :
Spoils gathered from the mighty dead,
To enrich the learner's heart and head,
 And teach him how to live.

Her manners courteous, without art,
Out-speaking from her guileless heart,
 Golden opinions won ;
Improvement waited on her care,
Affection smiled, and life looked fair,
 Like dew-drops in the sun.

Like dew-drops, too, her life exhaled,
Her health, and strength, and vigor failed
 Before life reached its noon ;
Not love's wild prayer and gushing tear,
Nor friendship's claims, could keep one here,
 Whom death had called so soon.

From school one day returning home,
She found sad news had thither come,
 Filling her heart with gloom ;
Her grandma, stricken down by death,
Had to her God resigned her breath,
 Within her distant home.

On wings of love she thither flies,
To close her grandma's aged eyes,
 And mourn beside her tomb ;
This duty done, with friends she stays,
To pass the coming holidays,
 Before returning home.

But cruel death his dart prepares,
And fiercely hurls it unawares,
 Directly at her heart ;
Stricken, she faints, and gasps, and dies,
And in her distant grave she lies,
 From friends and home apart.

Sad breaking hearts her death deplore,
Her sun-lit face they'll see no more,
 Till the great day shall come ;
When from their graves the dead shall rise,
To meet the Saviour in the skies,
 And hear their final doom.

Let those dear friends who mourn her loss
Deny themselves and take their cross ;
 Obedient to God's word ;
Then follow Christ to worlds on high,
And dwell with saints above the sky,
 Forever with the Lord.

HOURS WITH THE PREACHERS.

IN the brief narrative I have given of my religious life I have studiously avoided speaking, except in two or three instances, of the different clergymen with whom it has been my privilege to become more particularly acquainted. This course has been pursued from a fear of giving offence by bringing before the public the names of persons who might not be well pleased to find themselves associated in print with the autobiography of an humble local preacher.

Still, I feel myself so much indebted to the faithful labors of the preachers of the Gospel for my progress and establishment in the divine life, that a sense of gratitude constrains me to leave on record at least an expression of my sense of obligation towards those under whose pulpit and pastoral exertions I have been so greatly profited. In doing this, I shall write down, in simple language, my own impressions of the men of whom I shall speak—not assuming, for a moment, to settle their mental or moral calibre, or determine their relative position in the church.

REV. BUEL GOODSSELL.

AMONG the personal incidents that mark the course of man's journey in life, that one is chiefly interesting which relates to his reconciliation to God, through faith in Jesus Christ. I shall never forget the circumstances attending this important period of my life. It was in the Willett-street church in New-York that I first became fully awake to the interests of my soul. There it was on a certain night that my spirit emerged from darkness into light. The incidents of that blessed hour are still vivid in my memory; and prominent among them is the part taken in my new birth by the reverend gentleman above named.

Mr. Goodsell is an excellent representative of the early Methodist preachers. Formed in the school of Asbury and George, and M'Kendree and Hedding, he has ever been in labors more abundant. He was among those who gave shape and symmetry to the church—who went out with the compass and chain to run her boundaries and set up her landmarks; and he has always proved himself fearless, persevering and faithful. From the seaboard to the St. Lawrence and the lakes he was among the earnest and self-denying laborers who, in the small and feeble days of the church, travelled the large circuits and bore valiantly the cross far among the ranks of the King's enemies.

He has always maintained a respectable position among his brethren, and been successful in his

work. In discharging the responsible duties of presiding elder, and in supplying important appointments, he has always shown himself equal to the position in which he was placed. On all the great issues of the day, we believe Mr. Goodsell is eminently conservative, rejoicing, indeed, in healthful progress, but little moved by the fancied attractions of reform, and not greatly given to change.

As a preacher he is plain, practical and fervent. Sound in the doctrines of the church, though not dogmatic, and more anxious to convert sinners than to engage in controversy. He is a man mighty in prayer, and successful in winning souls.

In the conference and in the assemblies of his brethren he is not given to vain disputations; but his practical good sense preserves him from error, and he is generally prompt and efficient in business, and more ready to vote than to speak.

He now occupies with dignity and acceptability the office of presiding elder of the Long Island district; and such is his zeal and fidelity, that but few of his younger brethren would be found so competent to magnify that office.

Such was the man under whose tutelage it was my fortune to be placed during my spiritual infancy. It was he who said, on the night of my new birth: "*Let us unite in solemn and silent prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost.*" Those words sank deep in my heart; and now, after more than twenty years have rolled over the heads of the pastor and convert, I can feel their solemn import as they fell upon my ear and entered into my

awakening soul. Distinctly, also, on my memory are impressed those other words, wherein I was called upon to "tell the people what the Lord had done for me."

Well may I treasure up the memories of that blessed night; and well may I, in this connection, make this public recognition of the aid which, under a merciful Providence, I received under the ministry of the Rev. Buel Goodsell. The church of God thrives by the energy and zeal of such men. Under their steady and fearless march the cause of Christ advances, conquering and to conquer. Much as Mr. Goodsell has done, and much as he is yet doing in behalf of the great cause, it is hoped that his mission is far from being closed. Long may the church yet include him among her effective and successful laborers!

REV. BENJAMIN GRIFFIN.

MR. GRIFFIN may be classed among the ministers of the old school. By this designation, however, we would not be understood as intimating any present inability to meet the ordinary demands or emergencies of the church. Endowed by nature with a vigorous constitution, a strong will, and great powers of physical endurance, he has, during a long ministry, been an earnest worker and an efficient soldier in the service of Christ.

As a preacher, he is always strong and earnest,

taking the shortest and most direct route to the hearts and understandings of his hearers. His convictions of truth are strong, and his perceptions quick. These qualities, united as they are, with a strong will, lead him rather to announce the *conclusions* of his own judgment, than the various steps or links of deduction by which he has reached them. Entertaining strong convictions touching such questions as have been settled in his own mind, he is regarded as a rather impracticable for any movement in church discipline or polity, inconsistent with what he considers fundamental principles, or organic law. He is a man of large and varied experience, and consequently possesses much influence in the conferences and councils of the church; and his financial talent and known business tact have made him a desirable acquisition to such committees as are appointed for financial or business purposes.

Mr. Griffin would hardly be considered, in the popular sense of the term, an accessible or a sociable man. He is too much a man of business, and *purposes* to be, as a general thing, available for the formal amenities of life, whenever they are unessential, and particularly whenever they are in any wise obstructive to the real object or business in view. This singleness of purpose and vehemence of will have doubtless given rise to an impression, sometimes current, that the man was made up more of intellect than heart. Upon those, however, who know him well, the impression is otherwise. To his intimate friends there is visible, under a stern exterior, a heart of the true grit—a heart warm and

affectionate in its impulses, and faithfully dedicated to God and his fellow man. He loves truth for its own sake. He is a stickler for law. He is a man to fight for a principle, and if requisite, could become a martyr to it.

Mr. Griffin has long been a leading and efficient member of the New-York Conference, where he still continues.

REV. STEPHEN REMINGTON.

THE successor of Mr. Griffin, at the Willett-street church, was the Rev. Stephen Remington. He differed very much from both of his predecessors whom I have named, not only in the peculiar cast of his mind, but in the uses to which he dedicated its several faculties.

He possessed more imagination, more subtlety, more accuteness, a quicker perception of nice distinctions, but less, perhaps, of judgment and steadiness of purpose than either of the gentlemen of whom I have spoken. He is a man of decided energy, and for a short campaign exhibits all the ardor and zeal which characterize the good soldier. He is, however, somewhat excursive in his activity, and inclined to reconcile, as far as may be, the duties of his profession with that love of change and novelty which is more or less common to us all. I should regard his intellect as belonging to the combative sort, and as such, rather preferring the chivalry of attack to the less romantic operation of

defence. There is, perhaps, no field of activity more acceptable to such a minister than the analysis and exposition of objectionable dogmas of outside denominations. To such peculiarities Mr. Remington came with a sharp and ready knife. He possessed the mind of a critic, and whatever opinions may have been entertained by his hearers, touching his success in this department of his mission, it doubtless inclines him rather to expose error than to exhibit truth.

Fond of analysis, his proclivities led him to resolve things into their constituent elements, and having done so, to invite attention to the objectionable, rather than to their commendable parts. In the empire of reason and philosophy Mr. R. belongs to what may be termed the *detective force*. His perceptions are quick, but I should judge more active to perceive error than to recognise truth.

He possesses considerable talent for disputation, and more than an ordinary command of language.

After serving the church with some success he was transferred to the Troy Conference; but commencing the study of medicine, he soon after retired from the ministry and began the practice of a new profession. In this, however, he did not continue long. He returned to the ministry, and soon afterwards was transferred to the New-England Conference. After serving two years in Boston and two more in Lowell, his views of Christian baptism underwent such a change as to induce him to leave the Methodist Episcopal and to unite with the Baptist Church, in which he still remains.

Since his connection with the Baptist Church, he has preached in New-York and Philadelphia, and now has the charge of a congregation in East Brooklyn.

REV. NATHANIEL KELLOGG.

SUCCEEDING Mr. Remington at the Willett-street Church came the Rev. Nathaniel Kellogg, a moderate preacher, but a most excellent and pious man. He was not a man for the great emergencies in the church, but was useful in the quiet walks of his profession. Possessed of a warm and affectionate heart—modest and gentle in his manners—he pursued his course, humbly and meekly, in the service of his Master. He won hearts, not so much by elocution and oratory, as by the fruits, exhibited in his own life and character, of a humble and unconditional reliance upon Him who was spotless and without sin. He bore the lamp, and with words of love and affection, invited sinners to join him, that by the light of the Gospel he might point out to them the significance and import of the bleeding Jesus.

For many years Mr. Kellogg has been in feeble health—quite unequal to the physical requirements of his profession. But such a man cannot be otherwise than useful, by the example he sets to those around him, of patience and meekness, and of faith, under all afflictions, in the blessed promises of our Lord.

REV. T. N. FELCH.

ON moving to New-Jersey with my family in the spring of 1841, I united with the Methodist Episcopal Church at Rahway, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. T. N. Felch.

Mr. Felch is decidedly a practical man. He is a successful preacher, earnest and effective in prayer, and possesses considerable influence in the New-Jersey Conference, to which I think he has always belonged. He is active in the discharge of all the duties pertaining to his calling, and has, in his day, been the means of bringing many sinners to Christ.

His style of preaching is argumentative. He is little given to flights of fancy, or to the practice of addressing the intellects of his hearers through their imaginations and passions. He possesses a good deal of business tact; shrewd, quick in his perceptions, and ready for any of the ordinary emergencies of the church. The marked feature in Mr. Felch's mental character is strong common sense. Energetic and thorough in all he undertakes, he is deservedly ranked among the great workers in the church. Nature seems to have blessed him with a robust constitution, with a certain mental equipoise, by the united influence of which he is able, without undue excitement, to direct more than usual strength to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. He has held the position of a presiding elder, and occupied other important places in his conference.

Mr. Felch is emphatically a Methodist. He loves

Methodism. He loves it *as* Methodism. He loves it as the doctrine which Wesley preached, and as the best exposition, in his opinion, of the Gospel of Christ. He is a good disciplinarian, thorough and systematic in what he does, or in what he undertakes. Social in his feelings, he is popular among his people; and as he is yet in the vigor of manhood, we may hope that the church may yet be blessed by many years of his effective labors.

REV. THOMAS SOVEREIGN.

MR. FELCH was followed at the Rahway church by the Rev. Thomas Sovereign—one of those old-fashioned, fatherly ministers whom everybody likes. He was beloved by the old and the young. He was a favorite among children—always winning, by his geniality and flexibility of spirit, their confidence and esteem. This we consider one of the highest eulogiums that can be passed on the truthfulness and warmth of the human heart. It shows, as a general thing, that it is in the right place. There is not, however, in those qualities which render Mr. Sovereign a cheerful and pleasant acquisition to society, any thing which diminishes the high respect entertained for his abilities as a man, or his qualifications as a preacher of the Gospel. He is not a great talker—though he succeeds in acquiring a decided influence over most persons with whom he comes in contact. This in-

fluence is not acquired, however, so much by his much talking as it is by *what* he says and the *manner* in which he says it. His pastoral visits are generally attended with valuable results, and contribute, perhaps, as much to the growth of the church as his services in the pulpit or at the altar.

As a preacher he is always acceptable—presenting the truth to his people in a plain and practical style, and rarely employing any aid in its behalf, further than the pure and steady light of the Gospel. His style of talking, whether in the pulpit or out of it, is peculiar. It is plain and simple; yet it always secures attention, and is, in general, effective. He is not a man to take sinners by storm; but rather to insinuate the truth quietly into their hearts, and, before Satan is aware of it, awaken them to a sense of their rebellion to God. Mr. Sovereign is still an effective laborer in the New-Jersey Conference.

REV. VINCENT SHEPHERD.

God selects his own instruments for working out the phenomena which we are observing in the moral and physical world. In his hands, means which, to our contracted vision, may seem humble and ineffective, often become the agents for working out results which produce joy and exultation among angels in Heaven. It is not the exclusive privilege of the mighty men of the earth to do great things.

The sling of David was as effectual in doing God's work as if swung by the arm of a giant. So does it often happen that ministers of Christ who are least obtrusive on the world's notice—who go quietly but steadily along in the path of their calling, and invoking no praise of men, are chosen instruments of God for bringing about great moral results. It is thus that the mightiest intellects of the land are admonished not to count upon any achievement—whether secular or religious—without God's sanction and assistance.

Mr. Shepherd was a man of a serious and devout mind, and possessed a heart amiable, affectionate and full of sympathy.

His mind, though not exhibiting a remarkable vigor or grasp, was yet characterized by a calm, steady seriousness, which seemed always to connect the man with the mission in which he was engaged. Unambitious, in the popular sense of the word, he aspired only to serve God and perform his duties in the church. He was a man of prayer—a devout man—who, realizing the importance of his calling, always resorted to prayer for the purpose of learning what God wished him to do, and for God's aid in doing it. He possessed fair natural abilities; but for want, probably, of early education, had not cultivated them so as to exhibit them to the best advantage.

Mr. Shepherd was not, however, by any means, an unsuccessful preacher. He had many seals to his ministry; and, in his own meek and humble career, we discover the confirmation of the truth,

which has so often been announced in the history of man and nations—that “the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong.”

Mr. Shepherd died in Jersey City, July 1, 1848; and we cannot better close this imperfect sketch of his character and ministry than to quote from the minutes of the New-Jersey Conference of 1849:—
“Brother Shepherd was a good preacher, a diligent student, a faithful pastor and an able and successful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. His death was sudden. He died of apoplexy. To our departed brother sudden death was sudden glory. It was a translation almost as sudden as Enoch’s; almost as sudden as the departure of the honored Elijah.”

REV. JACOB SHAW.

IN the fall of 1846 I moved with my family to East Brooklyn. I there connected myself with the Methodist Episcopal Church, then in charge of the Rev. Jacob Shaw. Mr. Shaw left that church in the following spring, so that my knowledge of him relates principally to the period that intervened. It was a winter, however, long to be remembered by the writer of these lines. It was winter, indeed, to all earthly objects within its sphere, but as the time relates to the condition of my soul, it was a summer, genial and prolific in spiritual fruit.

Living near the church and near the pastor, it was my fortune to enjoy the double advantage of

this gentleman's preaching and frequent society. I cannot well, in this public reference to his name and religious character, omit to recognise the benefit and consolation my own heart derived from his faithful and earnest expositions of God's Word.

Mr. Shaw is well informed, and he possesses a strong, clear, logical and well-disciplined mind. He is industrious, and enters upon whatever his hands find to do with a fervency of spirit and a steadiness of purpose which generally insures success. He is amiable in his disposition, and possesses, to a considerable extent, the qualities requisite for a successful ministry. From the opportunities we have had of judging, we think he is undervalued. He is still an active and faithful worker in the New-York East Conference, and it is hoped that the church may long retain his valuable services. He is competent to occupy and adorn any position in his Conference.

REV. DAVID OSBORN.

WHILE residing in East Brooklyn, I became acquainted with, and for a short period had the pleasure of listening to the preaching of the Rev. David Osborn.

Mr. Osborn is an amiable and deeply pious man—a man of much prayer, and universally beloved. He is modest and unassuming, yet efficient in the work of the ministry. He is a studious and well-

informed man. As a preacher, he is clear, logical and convincing ; and possessing considerable imagination, with a vein of the poetical in his mental constitution, he seems to have all the elements of a great speaker ; and yet there is, perhaps, one thing wanting—a deficiency which will account for his not occupying that position as an orator, for which the mental features above alluded to eminently qualify him—I mean an insufficient exercise of *will*, and a certain mannerism, which detracts considerably from the effect which would otherwise necessarily attend his pulpit efforts. But still Mr. Osborn is a successful preacher. He is very effective as a pastor, and to diligence and fidelity out of the pulpit may fairly be attributed much of the prosperity that always attends his ministry. Young and in the full vigor of manhood, he is now faithfully at work in the New-York East Conference, and gives good promise of a future of success and honor in the church.

REV. WM. P. CORBIT.

My acquaintance with Mr. Corbit commenced at the Halsey-street Methodist Episcopal Church in Newark. As a man and a member of society, he is social and genial in his feelings. As a preacher he is successful. It is in the latter capacity that Mr. Corbit presents some striking peculiarities, and to these he is chiefly indebted for his great popu-

larity among the masses. He possesses a most exuberant imagination, immense fervor and remarkable graphic powers. It would, we think, be no injustice to this gentleman, nor would it be detracting from his merits as an effective preacher, to say, that instead of possessing, he is *possessed* by his imagination and fancy.

Within the sphere of these two attributes of the mind, Mr. Corbit seems to have unlimited privileges. Into their uttermost regions he has not only the power of going himself, but the high prerogative of taking his hearers with him. He has not only the imagination to conceive, but the power to paint his conceptions in the most graphic outline and in the most vivid colors. Thunder-bolts flashing athwart the sky—the chafed ocean and the foaming brine—angels with golden wings, celestial palaces, paved with diamonds and studded with stars—are familiar objects to his fancy, and can, as occasion requires, be summoned like the spirits of Prospero, to come forth and do his bidding.

It is unnecessary to say what effect such preaching is likely to produce. The open lips and dilated eyes of the masses who usually crowd his church sufficiently attest the power of the man.

As a habitual and intense exercise of the imagination is always unfavorable to the full development of the logical powers, so has it unquestionably kept in the background all natural tendencies which Mr. Corbit may have had for the argumentative style of preaching. He is not a reasoner. He does not address the understanding directly. As

his instruments and weapons are furnished by the imagination, he is true to his obligations to her, and rarely employs them in any field but upon the imaginations and the passions of his hearers. He is a successful minister, and is actively at work at the Mariner's Church, in the New-York East Conference, where, from Sabbath to Sabbath, he proclaims Christ to listening thousands. May his shadow never be less!

REV. S. Y. MONROE.

MR. CORBIT was succeeded at Halsey-street by the Rev. S. Y. Monroe, a man who, in every attribute of his character, was the direct antithesis of his predecessor. This is a gentleman of decided ability, possessing much influence in his Conference, and now occupying the position of a presiding elder. He was a member of the last General Conference, and is generally looked upon as a rising man in the church. The most prominent feature of his mental organization is a healthy, vigorous and practical *common sense*. This is the substratum of the entire intellectual man. It is the centre about which all other faculties revolve, and to which they are, whether acting separately or combined, in the most perfect subjection. Relying upon fundamental principles, and truths that are self-evident to the plainest understanding, he enters his pulpit with the self-possession of a man who thoroughly comprehends and

who intensely feels the great truths he is about to expound. His style is clear and logical, and is distinguished for almost a mathematical directness and precision. His manner in the pulpit is impressive, and as a preacher he is eminently successful.

Mr. Monroe relies upon no nice rules of rhetoric as aids in the pulpit, and rarely employs any figures of speech as accessories to his logic, though he speaks with taste and accuracy. He takes his stand, as a general thing, on principles which are recognised by all, and proceeding from them, by exact and obvious deductions, he brings his hearers to a conclusion which is in perfect logical harmony with their own common sense. Regarding this as a test of a preacher's ability, Mr. Monroe is fairly entitled to the reputation he has achieved as a zealous, practical and successful preacher. Should his life be spared, we risk little in predicting for him a future of usefulness and distinction. The general church will yet hear of Samuel Y. Monroe.

REV. ROBERT SENEY.

UPON my return to Brooklyn, after my sojourn at Newark, I united with the church in Carlton Avenue, then under the pastoral care of the late Rev. Robert Seney.

This gentleman was an accomplished minister of Christ. In his best days, he was of genial disposition and of affectionate and gentle manners. In

intellect and culture he was among the foremost of his brethren. A ripe scholar, possessed of much logical acumen, with an imagination glowing yet chaste, and a compact and masculine style, he had as a preacher but few superiors.

In private intercourse Mr. Seney was a delightful companion. Social and conversational in a high degree, with a cordial familiarity and a sparkling wit, he was the soul of the society in which he moved. He was greatly beloved. But for a sort of constitutional indolence, and the entire want of ambition, he would have stood among the eminent preachers of his age.

Mr. Seney died while yet comparatively in the vigor of life, but he died as the Christian only can die, peacefully and calmly, and in the full hope of a glorious immortality. He has left behind him a name that will long be green in the memory of his kindred, and of those who were workers together with him in the vineyard of the Lord.

“Green be the turf above thee,
Friend of my better days,
None knew thee but to love thee—
None named thee but to praise.”

REV. NICHOLAS WHITE.

MR. SENEY was succeeded by the Rev. Nicholas White, an excellent old man, whom every one loved for the fine qualities of his heart, his faithful piety

and his undying interest for the church. His heart was large, and took in its range the entire race of man. He loved and cared for his fellow-men; regarding them all as brothers and children of a common parent. There was a moral beauty in his unaffected philanthropy that won the esteem and confidence of every brother who came in contact with him. Mr. White is a man of excellent good sense, and his large experience has enabled him to inculcate upon the minds of his younger brethren many a lesson which had never been taught them before.

He is a devout Christian; and in the days of his vigor and activity, was earnest and faithful in the discharge of the various duties pertaining to his calling.

Mr. White has of late years been in feeble health, and unequal to the physical demands on a minister of the Gospel. His life has been useful, and such as to justify the high regard everywhere felt for his personal and religious character. May his declining years be as peaceful and happy as those of his vigorous manhood were faithful and useful!

REV. CHARLES FLETCHER.

BEFORE the term of service of Rev. Mr. White at Carlton Avenue terminated, I left that charge and united with a little band for the purpose of organizing a new church in Washington Avenue, Brook-

lyn. As a pastor, we were fortunate in securing the services of the Rev. Charles Fletcher.

This gentleman is much above mediocrity as a preacher. Exceedingly well balanced in his mental attributes, with scholarly tastes and considerable cultivation, his sermons are generally of a high order. He possesses clearness of style, considerable analytical power, with a fancy well cultivated but not very sprightly. His preaching is characterized by dignity, strength and manliness, without great brilliancy or originality. He is retiring in his habits, meditative and studious, with little sociability, and perhaps not as well adapted as some others for pastoral efficiency. He is generally, however, popular with the people in his field of labor, and is undoubtedly a rising man in the church. His character and abilities will always command the respect of the public, and he will doubtless be found equal to any position to which he may be called by the appointing power.

REV. CHARLES B. SING.

IN the summer of 1852 I took up my residence at Newburgh. I there united with the congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, then under the spiritual care of the Rev. Charles B. Sing.

Mr. Sing is a thoroughly educated man. He graduated at the Military Academy at West Point in 1836, and after serving in the army about two

years, resigned his commission and became a soldier of Christ. He very soon united with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and became a preacher of God's Word. Subsequently joining the travelling ministry, he began to occupy important places in the New-York Conference, where he still remains, performing faithfully the duties pertaining to his calling.

Mr. Sing possesses a clear and logical mind, which gives to his sermons the precision and directness of a demonstration, rather than the fervor of an exhortation. This feature is doubtless fairly attributable to the mathematical and logical training which he received at the Military School. He addresses the intellect more directly than the heart—not, however, so much in consequence of any *deficiency* of true feeling, as the *preponderance* of the philosophical over the emotional character of the man. He is esteemed a preacher of more than ordinary ability. Studious in his habits, and distrusting—perhaps too much—his own ability to meet sudden occasions, he seldom or never ventures into the pulpit without being thoroughly prepared. Though I might not regard him as a man for an emergency, I should think that, for the ordinary duties of his profession, he had few superiors. Naturally diffident, he is inclined rather to underrate than to magnify those powers which he actually possesses.

My intercourse with this gentleman, whether in or out of the church, is very strongly and agreeably impressed upon my memory. Circumstances favored a frequent social intercourse with him during my

connection with his church, and from that privilege I am sensible of deriving profit as well as pleasure. Without exhibiting to a casual observer any remarkable social qualities, he was yet accessible, and possessed such qualities of heart as not only secured high respect but inspired the confidence of those who made his acquaintance.

Mr. Sing is still in the field, and in the full vigor of manhood, doing faithful service in the New-York Conference. Could he shake off a little of his timidity, and acquire more confidence in himself, his moral power would be immensely increased.

REV. S. A. SEAMAN.

ON resuming my residence in Brooklyn, I joined the church then in charge of the Rev. S. A. Seaman.

Mr. Seaman is a man of considerable cultivation ; a pious man and a diligent pastor. He is devout and thoughtful ; exact and careful in the discharge of his various duties in the church, and would doubtless be far more successful as a minister of the Gospel were it not for a defective hearing, which has embarrassed him for a number of years. This misfortune has been the only drawback against considerable success as a minister ; but even this hindrance has not prevented him from being a useful man. The seals of a good man are not confined exclusively to great emergencies, or to the exhibi-

tion of commanding abilities, or to the production of visible and striking effects. They may be used in the quiet and unattractive walks of the Christian ministry, and leave impressions that settle at once the great issue of life. Mr. Seaman has in this way, doubtless, done much service to the cause of Christ.

REV. J. W. B. WOOD.

It was not my privilege to sit long under the ministry of the above named gentleman; but long enough to become acquainted with some of his peculiar abilities.

Mr. Wood in early life was a sailor; and like most of those who have been accustomed to go down to the sea in ships, he carries with him certain indications of his former employment. He possesses a strong constitution, an athletic body, and lungs that attest the virtue of their early training. He goes to his work, whether in or out of the pulpit, like a man who is in earnest, and who feels that "Some things can be done as well as others." He is bold and fearless in his enunciation of what he thinks to be the truth; animated in his style of delivery, and though not remarkable for clearness and systematic arrangement, he generally succeeds in making a decided impression on his hearers. He is a pious man and zealous in the cause of the church. May he long be retained among the laborers in the vineyard of the Lord.

REV. JOHN M. REID.

THE last gentleman I have to notice in this series of imperfect sketches is the Rev. John M. Reid—under whose pastoral care I am, while writing these lines.

Mr. Reid is a good preacher, and possesses more than ordinary ability. He is well educated, and has occupied important positions in the church. He has considerable influence in his Conference, and was a member of the last General Conference. He is energetic, and pursues with a good deal of ardor and steadiness of purpose whatever object he may have in view.

He is still comparatively young. The sands in his glass indicate many remaining years to the allotted pilgrimage of man; and we may hope, that as he ripens in years and experience, the church will receive new and continuous vouchers of his service in her behalf.

I have endeavored, in the next preceding pages, to give some tolerable outlines of a few of our Methodist preachers. I have prudently confined myself to those whom I knew best, and who have left the most durable impressions upon my heart and mind. I am sensible of the imperfections of these sketches; and yet I am conscious of an honest effort on my own part to do them justice, and no more than justice. They are all men; and as such, possess or did possess their separate individualities and min-

isterial characters. A writer accustomed to closer observations, and practiced in the art of pictorial composition, would doubtless have drawn nicer distinctions, and presented more graphic portraits of these several ministers of Christ. The only merit that I can claim—and, indeed, the only defence I can offer to objections, is, that honestly and void of prejudice of any kind, I have sought to describe them just as I found them. As in tracing back the path of my religious experience I am reminded of many bright and happy hours which can never fade from my memory, so, too, do I treasure up the names and characters of those from whose lips I have heard the blessed truths of the Gospel.

This is perhaps the best explanation the writer can give of the origin of these sketches; for feeble and imperfect as they unquestionably are, their production has been, in one sense, a labor of love. The name of each individual is associated with delightful memories, and the portraits here submitted are but the products of those hours in which such memories have been indulged.

Having made this humble effort to delineate the ministerial character of particular individuals, the reader, I hope, will pardon me for submitting some general views touching the relations which exist between the preacher and his people.

To enter on the ministry of Christ is to assume one of the highest responsibilities which can devolve upon man; and in careful reference to that responsibility, should be adjusted the relations between the minister and his people. They are all—the minister

and people—but men. They are alike imperfect, frail, and liable to go astray. God only is perfect. The mission of a preacher is to teach God's Word. He is a messenger sent to prepare the way of the Lord. In short, he is an appointed ambassador to advocate the cause of Christ on earth, and as such ambassador, is the spiritual adviser and director of his people.

Such being the office of the preacher, the relations between him and the members of his congregation are easily defined. He is their teacher; they are his pupils. The responsibility of guiding, and the obligations to obey, are reciprocal. This is the theory of their spiritual relations, and if human perfectability could be attained, these relations would be practically binding, and the minister and his people would act in perfect harmony. But such a state of things is scarcely looked for. We may approximate to such a relation in practice; and that is all we can do, or need hope for, till the kingdom of Christ is established on earth.

If the minister should at any time discover a want of those tokens of love, respect and confidence on the part of his people, to which his sacred office is certainly entitled, let him not be too hasty in pronouncing judgment against them. It is always unsafe for a single man to take issue with public opinion; and it would be extremely hazardous, in questions not strictly spiritual, for a minister to treat the opinions or the suggestions of his congregation with neglect.

If his people should, on any occasion, attribute

bad motives to his declarations from the pulpit, let him not, in virtue of his high calling and vantage ground, forget that he is himself but a man after all. Let him remember that he is a descendant from Adam, and as such descendant is probably tinged with some leaven of human nature.

Let the minister so circumstanced first of all things explore his own heart. Let him drop the lead into its most hidden depths, and see if he does not bring forth from its dark recesses some proofs of his own fallibility—some element he would not be willing to expose to the open day.

Communities are disposed to accord to ministers of the Gospel the benefit of every liberal presumption ; and whenever such a benefit is withheld, it is prudent for the preacher to study himself well before condemning his people—even in his own heart—with a want of respect for his sacred office.

A NEW COURT.

That difficulties will arise,
Though things be managed e'er so wise,
 The world must needs confess ;
But how to make the wrongs come right,
Is what the just would bring to light,
 That claims may find redress.

To seek in courts, these latter days,
To right one's wrongs, is of all ways
 That which we most deplore ;
I'm sure it is a better plan,
For each to choose a proper man,
 Then let them choose one more.

Three honest men together joined,
Will soon both law and justice find,
 Though little law they know ;
Without delay they'll find the mark,
And bring out Justice from the dark,
 Where she delights to go.

If not, let there be added more,
By parties, or the three before,
 A dozen if need be ;
Let two appointed by the State,
Good lawyers be, who in debate
 May urge the parties' plea.

Let suits be tried while parties live,
And witnesses their voice can give,
 Or while the thing is bright ;
Then burn a thousand books of law,
And rules from truth and justice draw,
 Then we may reach the right.

Who can compute the money saved,
And minds relieved that were enslaved,
 If plans like this should take ?
How many pettifoggers learn
To live on what they had to earn,
 If minds were once awake !

Then judges, too, their courts might close,
Sharp lawyers, of their briefs dispose,
 And clients breath more free ;
No more anxiety and strife,
Should damp the joys of human life,
 Or mar its harmony.

Disputes might then adjusted be,
And wrongs redressed without a fee,
 To those of "shyster" clan ;
If not, let prompt appeal be made
To courts of a still higher grade,
 Constructed on our plan.

This court should be constructed, then,
Of honest, high-toned, fearless men,
 Unmoved by bribes or fears ;
Where vice in gold should be suppressed,
And Virtue meek, her rights redressed,
 Should smile amid her tears.

SELF-DECEPTION.

THE thoughts I am about to submit were suggested by chap. xxvii. 9, of Jeremiah, in which the inspired prophet is made to say, "Thus saith the Lord, deceive not yourselves." These words were uttered as a warning, by Him who is the searcher of hearts—by him who can at all times look into its recesses, and who knoweth the end from the beginning, and understandeth the mischiefs and dangers to which the wickedness and sin of men are constantly exposing them.

God saw the condition of the heart of Zedekiah, that it was full of sin, and that the king would not hearken unto the voice of his prophet. He saw that he was laboring under a delusion, and mercifully exhorted him *not to deceive himself* in the belief that the Chaldeans would depart from Jerusalem, and return not again.

The consequences of self-deception, generally, are so serious that it will be profitable, perhaps, to spend a few moments in looking into its *causes*, its *tokens* or *evidences*, and lastly, its *fatal consequences*.

First, then : Why do we, or how is it that we deceive ourselves ?

It seems strange, that man, who was born with instincts of self-preservation, who is naturally supposed to regard his own private interest as paramount to that of his neighbors—it is strange, I say,

that he should persist in doing that which he would deem injurious for another to do unto him. How is it, that if a man deliberately deceive us, we resent it, and yet persist in deceiving ourselves? Deception is surely injurious—whether we are the subjects of other's deceit, or whether we deceive ourselves. We are not likely to inflict deliberately an injury on ourselves. Why, then, it may be asked, do we deceive ourselves? The answer, we think, is quite simple. We are from the beginning corrupt, and inclined to evil, and we are always deceiving ourselves when yielding to the temptation to sin. Satan is a deceiver from the first. He deceived Eve into a rebellion, and he will deceive every one who listens to him. He is the prince of deceivers; for he has a way of making every one whom he subdues, argue their own case, so as to reconcile their conscience to his counsel. This sophistry which the heart practices on itself is *self-deception*, and it originates, doubtless, in our willingness to listen to temptation. We are in this way implicated in our own deception. We are not made responsible for the temptations of the world, nor for the fact that the "Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Nor was Eve blameable for the existence of the fruit in the garden, that carried death in its core. The guilt is in listening to the first overtures of Satan. In dallying with him we are deceiving ourselves; for if he can secure our ear, he is almost sure to succeed in his object.

Another cause of self-deception is to be found in

an unbridled tongue. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." (1st John, i. 8.) A falsehood, often repeated, begins to have the semblance of truth. If, while not clearly convinced that our course is correct, we permit ourselves to declare that what we practice is right, and continue to so practice and declare, we shall at last resolve in our own minds a doubtful vice into a certain virtue, and by so doing *deceive ourselves*.

A third cause for self-deception may be found in the innate deceitfulness of the heart itself. We are taught, (Jer. xvii. 9,) "The heart is deceitful above all things." Again, (Matt. xv. 19,) "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." We here get at the very fountain of the mischief—the very root of the evil—the seat of the disease. The first step taken by a skilful physician, when the consequences and symptoms of a bodily disease are conceded, is to inquire into the cause and its location, and after settling that question, he knows *where* to apply the remedy. By the light of revelation, and with the grace of God, we must be our own spiritual physicians. Let us therefore (2 Cor. v. 7) "purge out the old leaven," that we "may be a new lump." For a faithful discharge of this office, aided as above-mentioned, we are ourselves responsible. It is for us to purge out this old leaven. The old leaven of ignorance we must purge out by study and meditation; that of unbelief by prayer and watchfulness; that of procrastination by instant action.

The first evidence of self-deception which I shall mention is presumption or blind confidence. When

we see a man expressing, or in any manner exhibiting confidence in his own moral ability to resist temptation, we strongly suspect that he is deceiving himself, and would commend to his early consideration the advice of St. Paul, (1 Cor. x. 12,) "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

A second evidence of self-deception is *procrastination*. This is a conclusive evidence that a man is deceiving himself. Let us for a moment look into this matter. Reader; do you believe that you are a creature of God; and, as such a creature, dependent upon him for every blessing you enjoy; aye, for the privilege of living another hour? You say yes. Well further. Do you believe that God has any claim upon your heart or services, and that such a claim is just? Do you admit the truth of revelation, and the necessary condition of your reconciliation to God, in order to escape everlasting damnation? Are you reconciled now? To all the foregoing questions you reply in the affirmative, except to the last. You admit that you ought to be reconciled, and that to secure your eternal salvation you must be reconciled, and upon the heel of such admissions you say that you are not reconciled. What a concession! Poised on the edge of a precipice, over which a breath may, at any moment, cast you for an eternity; and yet not prepared to say what kind of eternity you select! You procrastinate; but why? To this question there is no answer. The lips are dumb. Reason, and that sort of common sense which governs us in matters of business,

can make no answer. There is, however, a *verbal* answer sometimes made when there is no other way of evading the question—a bald and sneaking sophistry which Satan often employs for the relief of sinners. It is this; that it is not a proper season; that their hearts are not in a fit condition for so solemn a thing as an open profession of Christ; that is to say, admitting they are sinners; admitting they are trembling on the verge of an eternal death; admitting the promises of Christ; admitting the present hour may be the last in which they may have power to accept the offer of salvation; admitting all these things, what do they say? It matters not in what terms their answer may be couched, it amounts to nothing more or less than this; they are not exactly *prepared to be saved!* Is this the language of common sense? Is this the language, or is this the answer which a man, who has been condemned by a worldly judge, returns to an offer of a reprieve? Does a convict reject a pardon because his heart is not fit to receive it? No. “But,” says the sinner, “if I do not now openly profess Christ, it is not because I reject him. O, no! I am waiting for a more suitable occasion. I am waiting till I can come to him with a purer and more contrite heart; with a heart fit to come to the feet of Jesus.” This is the very answer we are expecting. It is the most conclusive evidence that the heart is deceiving itself. It is procrastination; and he who so procrastinates matters touching his eternal life is surely deceiving himself into eternal damnation.

There is another striking symptom of self-decep-

tion, to wit: *Indifference*. In reference to every other matter than religion, men are apt to feel an interest, particularly if it be one affecting themselves. Neither are they slow to manifest their interest by words and actions. But in a matter involving the most vital interest, we are apt to be more reserved, both in our conversation and in our actions. Is this reserve a real indifference, or is it in consequence of a certain coyness with which men are seized when approaching a delicate subject? Between a state of painful interest and a state of indifference, touching any subject that may be addressed to the mind, there is not, in worldly matters, always to be found a choice. The instincts of self-preservation, and our recognition of the relations existing between means and ends, frequently compel us to accept the former condition as necessary for our own safety. But if no worldly considerations intervene, we prefer calm indifference, doubtless, to any kind of interest that is likely to involve discomfort. No sensible man, when brought to the point, can dodge the truths of the Bible. But he can quiet, and he has been lamentably successful in quieting the admonitions of his own conscience, resisting the appeals of the Holy Spirit, from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year—he reaches a state of *indifference to matters of religion*—and there can be no better evidence than this, that he has been, and now is, deceiving himself. There are none concerning whom this remark is more true than those persons who become indifferent while complying with the formal requisitions of

the church. That indifference to vital interests, which grows up in Christian society, which calmly reposes beneath the most decorous observance of Christian usages and forms, is evidence of a self-deception of the most fatal sort. Such indifference is quite compatible with the practice of many virtues. A man in such a state may go to church, read his Bible, be deferential and respectful to ministers of the Gospel—put his quarter or half dollar in the plate—subscribe to charities and missions—in short, he may put on all the clothes of religion, and yet be indifferent to it. He is not, of course, indifferent to *appearances*, for those appearances, which he has so scrupulously observed, have been, in one sense, his protection; they answer the purpose of a sort of *ticket*, which enables him to “pass on” among the pious. If a man can thus protect himself from the voice of his own conscience, and the offices of importunate Christians and really pious friends, and at the same time believe that he looks and acts like a Christian, his danger of indifference is great; and in proportion to his indifference is he deceiving himself.

In fine, indulgence in any sin or practice, which lulls the man into indifference, and induces him to rest short of acceptance with God, is conclusive evidence of self-deception.

Every man professedly aims at happiness; this is the object to be desired, and all are struggling, in their own chosen ways, to attain it. The sinner labors as hard to be happy as the faithful follower of Christ. He will rise early and toil late, but the

object he follows retreats before him like an *ignis fatuus*, always promising, yet ever deceiving and eluding his grasp. And why is this? Why is it that the ungodly man is unhappy—even when, to all outward appearances, he flourishes like a green bay tree? Most clearly because he sets his heart on the wrong objects. In selecting the means of being happy he selects the wrong means, and in that selection he deceives himself. He cannot conceal this self-deception from others, for his course of sin is evidence conclusive that he deceives himself.

Let us now proceed to consider some of the *consequences* of self-deception.

Its general consequence will of course be disappointment.

In spite of the prophetic warnings mentioned in our text, the royal sinner, Zedekiah, persisted in deceiving himself about the safety of Jerusalem. He would not be warned. He rejected the prophecy. He put in prison the very instrument of God's tender mercy to him and his people. It was against the wishes of his heart; it was a reflection upon his royal strength; it was, in his view, a sort of treason to question his ability to resist the enemy, or to be told that the Chaldeans would return and subdue the city that had *him* for its king. It wounded his self-love; and he silenced the tongue that dared to warn him of his danger. What was the consequence of this self-deception? The terrible judgment that soon followed affords the answer. The chapter from which our text is taken contains a

graphic account of the consequences of self-deception. The sons of the deceived monarch are slain before his eyes. Their bleeding bodies were the last objects on which his eyes were permitted to rest. Then deprived of sight forever, he could hear about, but could not see the smoke and flames that were ascending from the burning city. Here is a picture of the consequences of self-deception, and may be regarded as a lesson to those who deceive themselves touching the commands of God, and the warnings of the Holy Spirit.

History exhibits on almost every page instances of self-deception; and its succeeding chapters reveal in various lights the consequences that follow it. History is defined to be Philosophy, teaching by examples. Regarding it as such, there is no deduction from it more momentous than that he who looks to the world and its promises for his chief good is deceiving himself. The Emperor Charles V., in the zenith of his power, in the midst of all the gorgeous trappings and splendors of his court, discovered the important truth that he had been deceiving himself; and he sought to profit by the discovery by renouncing the objects that had deceived him, and dedicating, for the remainder of his days, his thoughts and services to God.

The first Napoleon was a self-deceiver of the first magnitude. The world perhaps scarcely furnishes a more striking lesson to self-deceivers than the wonderful success and sudden fall of this man. Nothing was too great for his ambition. There seemed to be no obstacle that he could not sur-

mount. He scorned men, and princes, and kings, and all earthly powers. He disregarded even the commandments of God, and deceived himself into the belief that every thing must bend to his will. The day of reckoning came, and verily he, too, got his reward.

There is another consequence of self-deception which should not be overlooked. I mean the *fear* that shall come upon him who deceives himself. "The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him." (Prov. x. 24.)

The consequences of a self-deceiving and wicked life must be such as to make the sinner any thing but happy. He must feel at all times that he is not secure. He is sensible that there is something wanting. He lives in a continual dread of he knows not what; a sense of an impending evil which he cannot avert.

Job, in the depths of his affliction, exclaims: "When I looked for good, then evil came unto me." Such must be the exclamation uttered by those who are deceiving themselves. Their lives must be made up of disappointments; of dreams unrealized; of hopes deferred, and at last destroyed.

The great and terrible disappointment, however, of self-deceivers, will be that which they will meet on the final judgment day. "In that day," said our Saviour, (Matt. vii. 22,) "many will say unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works?" In the next verse he tells us what will be the reply: "And then

will I profess unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me ye that work iniquity.”

We learn from this, that on the final day many will meet with a disappointment, when it will be too late to profit by it. Having perseveringly deceived themselves on earth, they will be undeceived in the presence of their Lord and Judge. The great issue of eternity will be there decided ; and what a thought !—that such a tremendous issue should turn upon the fact, that believing themselves followers of Christ on earth, and founding the hopes of eternal life on that belief, many had simply been deceiving themselves, and thus preparing and making the way sure for unutterable and endless misery ! Such are we taught will be the fate of those who have deceived themselves, by what they would call their good works.

But there is another class who will meet with a disappointment no less dreadful—a class not relying specially on their works, but who have otherwise deceived themselves in the deductions they have drawn from the Holy Scriptures concerning the merits of Christ. I refer to those who have searched the Scriptures with an improper spirit. Versed they undoubtedly may be, in the Old and the New Testament—able to quote you any number of texts—familiar with the names and the personal histories of its principal characters—appreciating the lofty inspiration of the prophets, and delighting in their unequalled imagery and splendid diction—equal, I say, to all these things—they will find at last that they have searched and admired in vain. They

have studied; but they have explored in the wrong spirit. They have not so much looked for truth, as they have hunted for seeming authorities to sustain a favorite theory. Let us look at this. How does a wise man proceed in the investigation of truth in worldly matters? Does he start at once with a *theory*, and then limit his inquiries to those points that may sustain his theory? Is this the course of a mind dealing honestly with itself, and without prejudice, in search of truth? We fancy not. This is the course of an advocate who has a proposition to establish, not of a philosopher who is honestly in pursuit of truth. But such is the spirit with which many investigate the Scriptures. They become learned in its letter, without catching its spirit. They deem themselves wise unto salvation, while in fact they are groping in the dark. They have raised for themselves a false and deceitful light, and by its guidance dream of entering the gates of the eternal city. Such is the sort of deception which they practice on themselves, who, relying on their own expositions of the Bible, neglect the plain and simple teachings of Christ. The disappointment of such will indeed be great.

The last kind of disappointment I will notice, is that which must follow the adoption of false creeds. Keen and terrible must be the anguish of such as found their claims to a blessed immortality on any of the sham religions of the world—who have staked their souls on the observance of any forms, or on the efficacy of any plan of redemption, other than on that which God, in his wonderful mercy,

has himself contrived. How simple the plan of salvation, which involves no greater effort on the part of sinners, than mere *acceptance* of Christ as our Redeemer!

They who think to enter Heaven on any other system are—to their eternal damnation, if they do not repent—deceiving themselves. They are laying up for themselves, on the last day, such a disappointment as the world cannot furnish—one that involves the terrible issue of life or death eternal.

In the words of the text, we say to you, readers: “Deceive not yourselves.”

THE RUM DEMON.

IN days of old, as we are told,
Fell demons dwelt in man,
Where for the hour, they show'd their power—
Thus ancient records ran.

But in this age, their hellish rage
Selects another home,
And now they lurk, to do their work,
In every cask of rum.

Their fiery glance, flashes askance
From every brimming bowl;
Their potent spell, prepared in hell,
Enchants the heedless soul.

Then songs of praise, he cannot raise,
Nor in them good can see,
His only joy, without alloy,
Is found in revelry.

Body and soul, without control,
A sacrifice he makes;
Not caring who his course may rue,
Or what fond heart he breaks.

Some lucid hour, when Satan's power
Exerts a feebler reign,
The victim's heart may feel the smart,
And struggle with his chain.

Its clanking sound, echoing round,
Alarms his foe at last,
Who upward springs, on sooty wings,
And binds his fetters fast.

Despairing, then, he sinks again,
Abandoning every hope,
Reels on his way, to fiends a prey,
In darkness still to grope.

He now begins, to see the sins,
Of household, church and friend,
And in his turn, like censor stern,
Exhorts them to amend.

His home of love, once prized above
All else below the skies,
Attracts no more, and from its door,
He to the rum-hole flies.

In that vile place, he runs the race,
Which toppers love so well,
Till demon bands, with practiced hands,
Complete their hellish spell.

Then mad with rum, they send him home,
The demon's sport and scorn,
While trembling wife, flies for her life,
And children weep forlorn.

Such pictures dark, will always mark
The liquor demon's wrath,
While pity weeps, as ruin sweeps
Along his victim's path.

To many homes hope never comes,
To give bright visions birth ;
But fell despair reigns silent there,
Shame sits beside the hearth.

From homes like these, on every breeze
Voices of wailing come ;
No law avails, while justice quails
Before the power of rum.

O, for some power, this very hour,
These demons to eject ;
To round them draw, some stringent law,
Our people to protect.

Ye statesmen proud, who clamor loud
For office, power and place,
Come take a stand, and save the land
From such a foul disgrace.

RETROSPECTIVE.

Back through the pages of my book
With trembling heart again I look,
Recall the time and toil it cost,
With hope that both may not be lost.

Hope whispers that the vainest mind
An hour for thought may sometimes find,
When friendly words from lips of love
A message from on high may prove.

The wanderer, too, when far from God,
Sinking beneath sin's heavy load,
May hail with joy the cheering voice
That bids him in his God rejoice.

The sin-sick soul that pants for aid,
May see in me free grace display'd
And learn to trust in Him alone,
Whose blood has power to atone.

To Him whose throne is in the sky
My faith lifts up its trembling eye,
And softly breathes the whisper'd pray'r,
O let my work be sanctioned there!

Then, whether men shall chide or praise,
My soul shall her full anthem raise,
To glorify her Saviour king,
Whose grace accepts the mites I bring.

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